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# MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD

*"I'll haul anything but a snake"\**

## The Great Flood of '93

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## Introduction

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The Great Flood of '93 was the largest natural disaster in Missouri since the New Madrid earthquake of 1811/1812. Certainly the flood was the most destructive natural event in state history if measured in terms of property damage, number of dollars spent in recovery efforts, and lives lost. When the waters finally receded, we learned that 49 Missourians had died, \$3 billion dollars had been lost in damages, and 3.1 million acres of Missouri farmland had been taken out of cultivation for the next year.<sup>1</sup>

The largest ever peacetime mobilization of the Missouri National Guard helped to mitigate the negative impact of this disaster. Missouri Army and Air National Guardsmen, numbering 5,615, spent 500,000 man hours on state emergency duty evacuating flood victims, building sandbag levees, purifying drinking water, providing security, augmenting law enforcement, and delivering emergency food.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout its long history, citizens have periodically questioned the need for the National Guard's usefulness. However, nothing has proved the worth of the Guard on a domestic level more than its ability to successfully respond to the events that periodically devastate large portions of the nation. Floods and flood related problems represent 90% of all Presidential disaster declarations<sup>3</sup>, and in each of these disasters, the National Guard has provided a large reserve of available manpower for a quick and significant response. The Missouri National Guard's response to the Flood of '93 is strong support for the need for such an organized, trained entity.

### Property Damage, Evacuations and Mortality

	Deaths	Acreage Flooded	Estimated property, crop damage	Number of evacuations	Number of homes damaged	Counties declared federal disaster areas
<b>Missouri</b>	25	More than 3 million	more than \$3 billion	19,000 people	12,000	112
<b>Iowa</b>	7	2.2 million	\$3.5 billion	12,610 families	13,335	99
<b>Illinois</b>	1	875,000	more than \$1 billion	15,000 people	7,200	35
<b>Minnesota</b>	4	5 million	\$1 billion	1,100 families	10,000	48
<b>Nebraska</b>	1	5.8 million	\$377 million	,247 people	2,000	90
<b>S. Dakota</b>	4	3.6 million	\$738 million	2,000 people	745	37
<b>Wisconsin</b>	2	N/A	\$800 million	2,500 people	4,700	46
			to \$1 billion			
<b>Kansas</b>	1	4.6 million	more than \$475 million	13,000 people	3,414	46
<b>N. Dakota</b>	2	9.4 million	\$520 million	,100 people	4,500	37

Source: Kansas City Star: Trial by Water, Special Supplement September 1993, pg. 31



## How “Great” was the Great Flood of ‘93?

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People like to measure and categorize. Perhaps this is due to the way men's and women's brains work, or maybe it is a basic competitiveness that seeks to measure one's own disaster in larger terms than another's.

So it was with the Great Flood of '93. Some claimed it was the biggest flood ever, while others argued that it was larger than the flood of 1955, smaller than the flood of 1937, and a great deal smaller than the flood of 1903. How does one measure the size of a flood? Certainly, at first glance, it seems easy to compare one flood with another. In Missouri, records of extensive flood damage exist all the way back to 1785. In that year, for instance,



Photo: Missouri Adjutant General's Report 1910

**Missouri Naval Militia rescues civilians during the flood of 1903.**

records tell us that the present site of St. Louis was underwater and boats could float all the way from there across to the bluffs on the Illinois side. Other records tell us that this 1785 flood level was four feet lower than in the flood level of 1844, when riverboats were able to tie up to “the front doors of river front businesses.”<sup>4</sup> The same record tells us that Old Ste. Genevieve was under fifteen feet of water in the flood of 1785. Statistics like those do not help us make precise comparisons with more recent floods, however. The “bluffs on the Illinois side,” and the “front doors of business,” are not really precise measures, and the site of Ste. Genevieve was moved in 1788, making any comparison at that site with later floods impossible.<sup>5</sup>

A more valid means of comparison became possible when the government began to measure things in terms of river level and establish formal standards for flood stages in the middle of the last century. River levels in the watersheds of the Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio Rivers were formally calibrated in 1863 when a zero river level was set to correspond to “379.94 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico.” A zero level, therefore, does not mean the river is dry, in fact at St. Louis there are 12 to 12.5 feet of water in the channel at zero level—more than enough to support commercial river traffic. Flood stage at a specific site is expressed as so many feet above this zero level, and corresponds to the point at which a river begins to come out of its banks and flow over normally dry land. For instance, at St. Louis, the flood stage is 30 feet, which means that at 30



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feet, the river would normally come out of its banks and begin to flood the city. However, this does not happen because a 22 foot levee has been built at St. Louis. To actually begin to flood the city, water has to rise higher than 52 feet above flood stage.<sup>6</sup>

At Kansas City, Missouri, the method of measuring flood stage is the same. In 1993, the Missouri River reached a level of 48.8 feet, which is 16.8 feet above the 32 foot mark that is considered flood stage. The 48.8 foot level was higher than the 46.2 foot level reported there in 1951, and higher still than the 45.0 foot level of 1903. It was even higher than the 48.0 foot level recorded for 1844, supposedly the greatest flood in Missouri prior to 1993. However, the 1844 mark was



Photo: Kansas City Star

**Missouri National Guard aircraft surveys flood damage in 1952 .**

set on a flood scale that predated the formal 1863 figure, and therefore really tells us nothing by way of comparison to later floods.

To further complicate matters, the government has made slight adjustments in the heights that they consider to be formal flood stages along the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers in 1903, 1915, and 1929.<sup>7</sup> These shifts and

changes throughout history have made it difficult to accurately

compare the magnitude of floods in Missouri throughout the state's history.

Another way and perhaps the best way to understand a particular flood's magnitude is to think in terms of discharge: "how many cubic feet of water rolls by a spot in a given second."<sup>8</sup> This is expressed in terms of cubic feet per second, or cfs. A cfs. is equal to about 7.5 gallons of water. In cfs. terms the 1993, flood measured 545,000 cfs. at Kansas City compared to 573,000 cfs. in 1951, and 548,000 cfs in 1903. To give some means of comparison with what is normal, the Missouri River in Kansas City usually runs at 35,000 to 41,000 cfs. In St. Louis the '93 flood produced 1,050,000 cfs, 782,000 cfs. in 1951, and 1,019,000 cfs in 1903. There is presumptive evidence—but again the standards are questionable because there was no standard of measurement until the middle of the 19th century - that the flood of 1844, measured by the cfs. standard was the biggest flood ever.<sup>9</sup> In 1844, the cfs. for the Missouri River at Kansas City was 625,000 and 1,300,000 at St. Louis. The meaningful interpretation of these statistics probably indicates that the flood of 1993,



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was the second largest flood in Missouri history.<sup>10</sup>

If visualizing how much water a cubic foot per second measures is difficult, conceptualizing the extent of the flood damage might be more useful.

The most dramatic evaluation of the cost of this flood was in lives lost. In the nine states (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Kansas, and North Dakota) affected by the flood, a total of forty-nine people died due to causes directly related to the flood. Missouri suffered in this regard more than any other state with twenty-five deaths between June and the end of August. The mortality figure grew in November when the floods returned to claim an additional twenty Missourians.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, Missouri led the nine affected states in other categories as well: 19,000 people had to be evacuated and cared for, 112 out of 114 Missouri counties were declared disaster areas at either the state or federal level, 12,000 homes were damaged beyond the 50% threshold and required \$268,000,000 to repair,<sup>12</sup> yet only one in ten Missouri homes had flood insurance, (a percentage matched throughout the nation<sup>13</sup>). Missouri lost three billion dollars in property and crops when almost three million acres of Missouri farm land flooded.<sup>14</sup>

One of the biggest problems of the flood was the overflow of untreated sewage into rivers. Throughout the nine state, flood-ravaged region, 410 sewage treatment plants sustained damage. Missouri, unfortunately led the flooded states in this category, with 100 sewage plants spewing over 100 million gallons of raw or incompletely treated sewage flowed into Missouri rivers daily! St Louis, was forced to release a total of 100 million gallons of raw sewage into the Mississippi River rather than have it back up into the city, and more than 30 million gallons of the noxious substance in the flood waters came from Kansas City.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps one of the best ways to visualize the damage that the flood caused is to contemplate, briefly, the massive amounts of damage done to the levee system throughout Missouri. It is



Photo: MOARNG 70th Public Affairs Detachment

**A levee break shows the magnitude of the river's destructive force in less than 30 minutes.**



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not surprising that Missouri -with Iowa a distant second - suffered the most because Missouri and Iowa are the only states of the nine to have to endure the flooding of *both* the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Much of the farm land in Missouri lies in the flood plains of both the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The richness of this land and the value that such land has for the agricultural economics of this state has deemed that this resource be protected by levees. Also, in 1927, when a flood on the Mississippi killed 214 people, a massive levee building program began in the river states in response to that disaster in the river states.<sup>16</sup> Since that date, 742 levees of varying sizes were built throughout Missouri, and the '93 flood destroyed or damaged 355 of them.<sup>17</sup>

Another indication of the magnitude of the '93 flood was the damage done to state highways. Of the 32,000 miles of paved highway in Missouri, 500 were destroyed in the flood, and an additional 2,000 miles were covered by water for varying periods.<sup>18</sup> By and large, damage to Missouri's road system was greatest for those near the Missouri River. To add to the catastrophe, an additional 400 miles of road was damaged, not by flood waters but by an increase in highway use necessitated by the need to reroute traffic around water obstacles. Roads built to accommodate a light rural traffic flow were forced to sustain numbers of cars far beyond their engineered capacities.<sup>19</sup> The cost of repairing the devastated roads and highways of Missouri was high. For instance, it cost \$750,000 to repair a mere 1,500 feet of road north of Jefferson City on U.S. 54,<sup>20</sup> and \$21,000,000 to repair the fourteen miles of Interstate 635 around Kansas City.<sup>21</sup>

Finally the recreation and tourism industry in Missouri suffered from the '93 flood. Repeated scenes of flooded areas on nationwide television convinced people outside of Missouri that "the Flood of '93 had swallowed the state."<sup>22</sup> The Missouri Tourism Commission feared that the flood would take a serious bite out of the \$7.8 billion dollars of revenue that tourism generates yearly, and that agency initiated a nationwide advertising campaign to counter the impression of complete devastation. There was a silver lining: for tourists brave enough to come to Missouri, there was a surplus of hotel rooms at the big tourist sites such as Branson.<sup>23</sup> The flood also shut out the hiking and biking set, because seventy-five miles out of the 200 on the Katy Trail system was washed out. Repair to the trail cost \$1,500,000, and the trail did not completely reopen until the spring of 1995.<sup>24</sup>

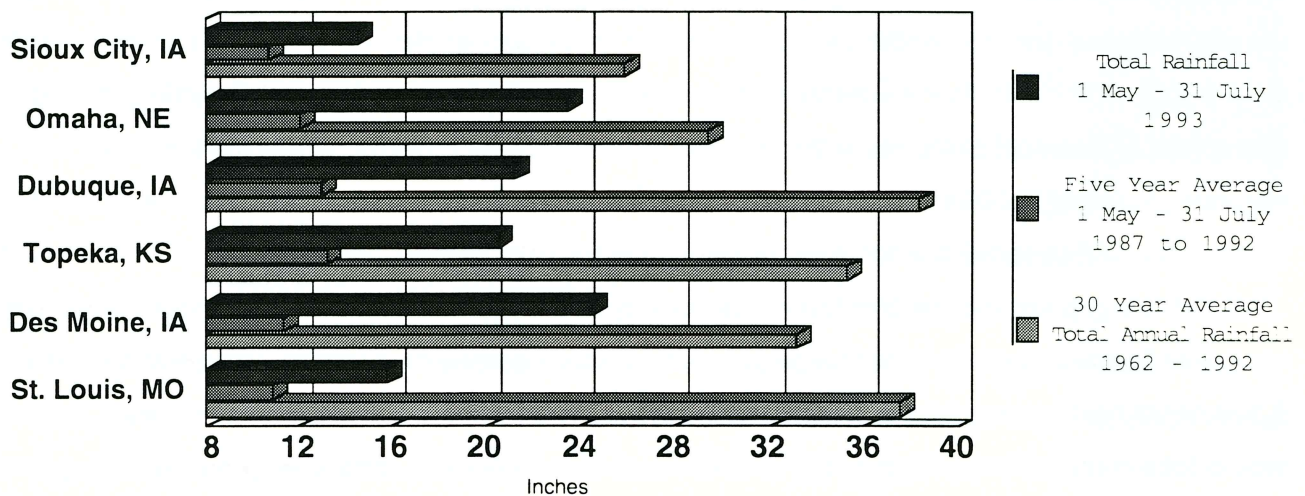


## THE CAUSE OF IT ALL "A SEASON IN HELL"

Before the beginning of 1993, almost nobody would have predicted a major flood. Missouri had been suffering since 1987, from a drought so severe that the normal barge season on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers was shortened by as much as six weeks for four of those years. Then, in July, 1992, the rains began. Rainfall throughout the state doubled in July, and after a short respite in August, doubled again for the months of September and October. November, 1992, received four times the normal amount of rain, and from December 1992 to July 1993, rainfall again doubled the average amounts for each month.<sup>25</sup>

Specific comparisons of the rainfall between 1 May and 31 July, 1993, show previously

**Comparative Rainfall Chart**  
*For Selected Cities*



(Rainfall Totals In Inches)	Total Rainfall 1 May - 31 July 1993	Five Year Average 1 May - 31 July 1987 - 1992	30 Year Average Total Annual Rainfall 1962 - 1992
<b>Sioux City, Iowa</b>	14.25	10.76	25.86
<b>Omaha, Nebraska</b>	23.43	12.04	29.39
<b>Dubuque, Iowa</b>	21.19	12.95	38.36
<b>Topeka, Kansas</b>	20.52	13.20	35.23
<b>Des Moines, Iowa</b>	24.49	11.38	33.12
<b>St. Louis, Missouri</b>	15.76	10.90	37.51

Compiled from statistics: Weather Data Service U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Weather Service  
(September 1993 Supplement to the Kansas City Star) and the National Climatic Data Center, Asheville NC.



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unparalleled amounts. For instance, in the five years preceeding 1993, Kansas City, Missouri, averaged 13.39 inches of rainfall between May and the end of July. In 1993, however, the same three month period brought 24.92 inches. The magnitude of this amount is impressive because over a 30 year period Kansas City, Missouri, had received about 37.62 inches of rainfall a year.

Similar record breaking rainfalls fell throughout Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas—states whose rainfall also feeds the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers in Missouri. Many river cities in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri received between 55 and 73 percent of their annual rainfall in this May through July time period of 1993.<sup>26</sup> What brought this surplus of rainwater after a five year drought? Some investigators cited one cause as being the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in the Phillipines.

Other contributing factors were due to unique changes in the upper atmosphere over Alaska in the north and the Bahamas in the south. The jet stream usually flows at 30,000 feet over Canada in the summer. That jet stream with its moisture is normally held above Canada by an atmospheric high pressure area that is centered over the Gulf of Alaska. In 1993, however, the Alaskan high was weak, allowing the jet stream to drop south over the United States. At the same time, an atypically strong high pressure area over the Bahamas drove wet air north from the Caribbean and Gulf. As this moisture moved north, it met more moist air coming in from the Pacific (Mt. Pinatubo's influence) and was held stationary over the Midwestern United States by the Canadian jet stream. All this moisture dropped as rain. When the ground absorbed all it could, the water ran into the river system and the flooding began.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that 1992-93 had been a dry year in the northeast, however, caused the Ohio River watershed to stay at normal levels. The result was that while the Mississippi River flooded north of its confluence with the Ohio, no flooding occurred south of the Ohio. The Ohio contributes three-fourths of the water that flows in the lower Mississippi. So while Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, and other cities suffered record rainfalls, the Mississippi at New Orleans was four feet below flood stage.<sup>28</sup> It was ironic that one Missouri Congressman, Representative Bill Emerson (deceased), reported to the House of Representatives' Agricultural Committee on July 15th that in parts of Dunklin County in Missouri's boot heel, cantaloupes and watermelons were dying for lack of rain, and the corn and soybean crops were endangered.<sup>29</sup>



## The Guard Becomes Involved

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On July 4th, 1993, twenty-seven Missouri National Guardsmen from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 128th Field Artillery, Kirksville, Missouri, arrived in Alexandria, Missouri, Clark County, at 1730 hours.<sup>30</sup> The Unit commander, Captain Walton L. Westbrook and his troops were there to try to save this small river town and to cope with the rising waters of the Mississippi. Captain Westbrook's first job

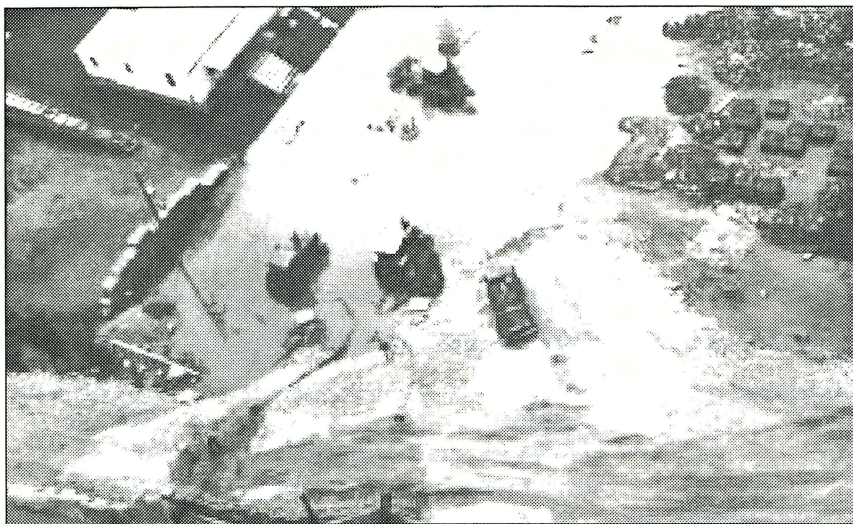


Photo: MOARNG 70th Public Affairs Detachment

**Alexandria Missouri, 29 July 1993.**

was to meet with Wayne Plumb, the presiding commissioner of Clark County, who had requested the Guard's help. After a quick reconnaissance of the area to assess damage, Captain Westbrook determined that the people of Alexandria, who were working hard to save their town, were undermanned and needed additional help to patrol and maintain the three miles of levee that had been built between Alexandria and the Mississippi. Guardsmen then patrolled the levee to look for breaks and "boils."

"Boils" were a big problem. A "boil" occurs when flood waters begin to undermine the structure of a levee. A weak point in the levee or sometimes a hole in the ground under the levee can develop into a "boil". In one instance, flood water surged through a gopher hole and



COL Calvin Broughton

**National Guard ingenuity works to contain a "boil" at Ste. Genevieve. Note the column of concrete pipe at the top center.**

worked its way under the entire levee. If not stopped, this kind of "boil" can gradually eat away from the inside and finally rip a gap in a levee. The name "boil" derives from the fact that in the area behind the levee the emerging water of the leak bubbles out in such a way that it looks like water boiling in a pan. At 2000 hours, five hours after arriving, Captain



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Westbrook's people found their first "boil."<sup>31</sup>

To contain a "boil," flood workers build a containment wall around the area of the "boil" of sufficient size and depth to allow a pool to form over the "boil" point that, in turn, creates enough pressure on the emerging water to equalize the force of the water pressing from the other side of the levy. The water coming through the "boil" then will take the course of least resistance, to rejoin the normal course of the flood's flow downstream. If the "boil" is discovered soon enough when it is still small, a simple method of stopping it is to stick a four inch PVC pipe over it and let the water level build in the pipe. If the "boil" is larger, containing it becomes a major commitment of men and materials.

While some Battery B soldiers contained the first of many "boils," others had taken on the logistics of finding food and shelter for the unit. The mayor offered the twenty-seven artillerymen the Community Center as a barracks, and the people of Alexandria rallied to the task of feeding them. From then on, the Guard never lacked community support. At one point, the president of Culver Stockton College in nearby Canton, Missouri, ordered his food service people to prepare meals for the troops and refused to even consider accepting payment from the Guard.

The Guardsmen returned the attention with extra efforts on behalf of the town. In time, the troops became so dedicated to protecting the towns that Captain Westbrook had to order his men not to over extend themselves, for fear that excessive fatigue and the dangerous nature of flood work would combine to produce injuries. Captain Westbrook's precautions paid off. His unit suffered only one "casualty." A young soldier just returned from basic training, drank six cokes and no water during the first day in Alexandria; he later complained of a "nervous stomach."<sup>32</sup>

As the flood waters gradually increased, it became apparent that operations in Alexandria would need additional troops. Over the next four days, fifty additional Guardsmen arrived in Alexandria from Battery B, along with 80 troops from Company D of the 1138th Engineers in Macon, and 114 soldiers of the 2175th Military Police Company in Hannibal joined the effort.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, the situation in Alexandria continued to worsen. By Wednesday, July 6th, the rising river required the troops to raise the levee three feet. Using bulldozers, the Guardsmen tried to push rock, sand, and dirt from the backside of the levee up nearer its top. However, the situation finally became hopeless. The town had to be evacuated. The Guard troops helped in this effort too. They went from house to house, telling the people that because the levee could not hold, they were offering assistance with evacuation. Beaten at Alexandria, the artillerymen were sent to Wayland, Saint Francisville, Gregory Landing, and Canton.<sup>34</sup>

Civilian help was readily available at Alexandria. The problem was getting these volunteers



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where they were needed. The Amish community in northeast Missouri was more than willing to help for instance, but had no way to get to the scene because the Amish do not drive vehicles. Battery B therefore dispatched a five ton trucks to pick them up. Throughout the crisis, the Amish worked ten-hour shifts on the levees. The Guard personnel marveled at these volunteers. Raised in an environment without air conditioning, doing hard physical labor from childhood, the Amish performed amazing feats. The best known was filling and carrying what became known as the "Amish Sandbag." This was a regular sandbag into which the Amish flood worker consistently shoveled twice the normal amount of sand. To everyone's surprise, the Amish carried these "double" sandbags without visible effort to wherever they were needed.<sup>35</sup>

Battery B of the 128th Field Artillery were not the only troops on duty in the early days of the flood. The MPs of the 2175th MP Company were also in a unique position because almost all of them were also citizens of the towns they were protecting. This had a tremendous effect on morale, since in many cases these men and women were working to protect their own home towns from flood damage.

The MPs, of course, joined in the sandbagging effort, but they also provided security and protected the general public - sometimes from themselves. During the flood, a number of wilderness outfitting stores sold canoe trips to "adventurous" individuals who wanted to experience boating on the flood swollen Mississippi. The personnel of the 2175th frequently had to either intervene to prevent these individuals from launching their canoes, or, if they spotted such a tour in the water, they notified Northeast Task Force Headquarters, which in turn dispatched Coast Guard personnel to intercept the tourists.<sup>36</sup>

A large part of MP work during the flood for the 2175th personnel was levee patrol. Not only were levees constantly threatened along their whole course by rising flood waters, but a number of individuals attempted to breach the levees on purpose. The motives for these actions were mixed, but someone usually tried to save land on one side of a swollen river at the expense of land on the other side. However, on 16 July, 1993, James R. Scott, of Fowler, Illinois, purposefully removed sandbags from a levee near the Highway 24 bridge connecting Quincy, Illinois with West Quincy, Missouri for another reason: he wanted to trap his wife on the Missouri side, so he could have a party on the Illinois side.<sup>37</sup> His action destroyed the only trans-Mississippi bridge link between Illinois and Missouri for two hundred miles.<sup>38</sup> It was due to the keen memory of an 2175th MP, Staff Sergeant Walter McKinney, that Scott was later apprehended and successfully prosecuted for breaking the levee. Sometime after the incident, McKinney saw Scott interviewed on television, remembered him as an individual that the MPs had questioned on the date of the



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levee break, and comprehended discrepancies in parts of Scott's television interview. McKinney contacted the Lewis County Sheriff's Department about these discrepancies, which gave the sheriff the information they needed to make an arrest.<sup>39</sup>

Company D, 1138th Engineers was also called to duty in northeast Missouri. A large part of this unit's duty revolved around protecting the American Cyanamide Plant near Palmyra, Missouri, as well as attempting to keep the Highway 24 Bridge open that crossed the Mississippi at West Quincy, Missouri. Although the American Cyanamide Plant was a private business, not normally subject to assistance from a National Guard unit, the Guard's help was justified because of the potential for a disaster if chemicals from the plant were released into the environment.<sup>40</sup>

Company D would spend ten days trying to save both the Highway 24 bridge and the Cyanamide plant, but they were only partially successful; the bridge was lost due to the senseless act of sabotage of James Scott,<sup>41</sup> and, the troops lost the battle to prevent the American Cyanamide Plant from being isolated when the levee broke.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout its stay, Company D pulled twelve hour shifts fighting boils, filling sandbags, and continually raising the height of the levee.<sup>43</sup> Keeping ahead of the rising river required working at night. Company D received help for these efforts from the 157th Air Control Group, Missouri Air



Photo: MOARNG 70th Public Affairs Detachment  
**CPT. Lane Endicott, Civil Engineering Squadron, Missouri Air National Guard, oversees a repair to the West Quincy Missouri Levee.**

National Guard that supplied and serviced high power lights and generators.<sup>44</sup>

For ten long days, Company D worked along side the employees of the Cyanamide plant to save the town and the surrounding environs from a release of chemicals. Unfortunately, on 16 July, a new river crest threatened to overtop the levee, and the Guard left the area later that night. Still their efforts had been heroic, and as they left, the civilian population lined the streets and roads holding handmade signs that expressed their appreciation.<sup>45</sup>

The Guard troops that served in Lewis, Clark, and Marion counties were the first Missouri Guardsmen to be involved in fighting the Flood of '93. In microcosm, these men and women experienced many of the things that other Guardsmen underwent throughout the whole flood period.<sup>46</sup> They patrolled the levies, filled sandbags, trans-



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ported civilian volunteers, controlled traffic, moved relief supplies into town, and moved civilian equipment out of town to higher ground. They also experienced some of the same difficulties that pervaded the Guard's whole flood relief effort: extended work schedules that left troops exhausted, material shortages and misunderstandings with local officials about what the Guard could and could not do. In a sense, these members of B Battery, of the 128th, Company D of the 1138th Engineers, and the 2175th MP Company, were the trailblazers who worked the kinks out of the system and who made it easier for the 4,229 Army National Guard soldiers and the 1,386 Air National Guardsmen who followed them in their respective efforts to contain the flood damage.<sup>47</sup>

## The Emergency Operations Center

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By 4 July it was clear that this crisis was not about to end, and Governor Mel Carnahan, with an Executive Order, put the Missouri National Guard on state emergency duty. It quickly became evident at Guard Headquarters that many more men were needed to fight the flood. The piecemeal commitment of units and sections of units that had worked so well in Clark and surrounding counties would be inadequate if larger numbers of Guard personnel went on duty. Prior planning had determined that when the number of committed units of company size increased to more than the number usually controlled by a battalion, State Area Command (STARC) Headquarters would establish the Task Force system under the overall control of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Following the governor's order, Colonel James H. Wakeman, Major William B. Pearre, and Master Sergeant Keely Haymart went on duty at 0900, 4 July and began the formation of the EOC. Once the EOC was established, it in turn created specific task force commands to oversee and coordinate relief efforts in specific areas of the state. By the end of the '93 flood emergency, three distinct task forces were in operation throughout the state: Task Force Northeast, activated on 9 July 1993, Task Force Southeast, activated on 11 July 1993, and Task Force Northwest, activated on July 12, 1993.<sup>48</sup>

This organizational model of an EOC overseeing Task Force commands was not something that had been created suddenly and without forethought. While there was no specific Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for a flood disaster, the Guard had prepared SOPs for other disasters including earthquakes, civil disturbances, prison riots and nuclear plant disasters. Once a flood disaster seemed eminent, it was a matter of taking bits and pieces of these other SOPs and tailoring a plan that could be used for a flood. In other words the operational procedures for other types of disasters were transferable to operations during the flood of '93. The SOP for the flood that developed out of this process outlined a natural progression towards activation of units and personnel that tried to match the response to the magnitude of the emergency. In early June, Colonel James Wakeman, the Officer In Charge (OIC) of the EOC for the Missouri National Guard, had ordered a simulation to practice some of the general concepts in the other SOPs. Surprisingly, in a world where things never go as planned, when the floods came, this practice paid off.<sup>49</sup>

The organization envisioned a centralized operations center, housed at the time in the basement of the Missouri National Guard Headquarters on 1717 Industrial Drive in Jefferson City. At the head of the Emergency Operations Center, and directly responsible to the Adjutant General, was the OIC of the EOC, Colonel James H. Wakeman. Below him, in the chain of com-



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mand were four Operation Center Officers in Charge (OCOIC) who alternated in the command of the center. Throughout the flood crisis, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Gunter, Major Robert Scruggs, Major William Pearre and Major Alan Garrison, alternated command of the center.<sup>50</sup>

The EOC had nine different staff sections of responsibility: aviation, logistics, personnel, communications, transportation, public affairs, operations, future operations, and the Property and Fiscal Office.<sup>51</sup> Each staff section assisted the EOC in its goal of receiving information and requests for aid at a centralized location and, if warranted, dispatching National Guard resources in an orderly and effective manner. Information flowed upward to the EOC along a logical path. On the local level, that path began with the county Emergency Management Director. The Emergency Management Directors were required to take state-sponsored training courses to prepare them to respond in an emergency by assessing the situation and deciding if the problem requires more than a local solution. If determined that it does, a county's Emergency Management Director, at the direction of the County Commissioner, will contact the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), under the direction of Colonel (Ret.) Jerry Uhlmann. SEMA scans the situation to see what resources the state has to meet the emergency. If those available resources are found only within the Missouri National Guard, then SEMA contacts the EOC, which, in turn, sends the required equipment and personnel to the site.

A unique feature of the EOC organization was the Future Operations Section directed by Colonel Wayne Medley and Lieutenant Colonel Michael Jameson. Given the fact that there were limited Guard resources during the flood to meet an ever expanding number of crises, there was a need for a group within the EOC to concentrate solely on future plans and deployment. Colonel James Wakeman, as commander of the EOC, met this problem by authorizing the creation of a special staff section (similar in concept in to the Long Range Planning Unit of the D Main component of combat division) that did nothing but concentrate on what Guard units would be doing up to 72 hours into the future with regard to the flood. This section dealt with such things as determining how high the river crest would be in three days; what area would be threatened by that crest; how long units and resources had been on duty and whether they could be effectively shifted from one area to another.<sup>52</sup> The Future Operations Section was a big factor in maximizing Guard resources and personnel during the flood.

This organizational scheme proved effective. Throughout the entire flood, most unit commanders reported that the EOC was accessible, and channeled resources to them in a timely and efficient manner. Perhaps the most important reason that the system worked is that the EOC did not try to "micro manage" troops in the field. Each unit commander had an Operations (OPS)

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Order that outlined in general terms what he was supposed to do and where he was supposed to do it. The unit commander interpreted potential missions within that OPS Order. For instance, an OPS Order might direct a unit commander to support relief efforts in St. Charles County and to deal with problems there related to security, traffic, levee work, and evacuation. If the local commander needed interpretation, they turned to their Task Force commander.<sup>53</sup>



## The Task Force Concept

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Directly below the State EOC were the various Task Force Commands. In the first days of the crisis, from 8 July through 10 July, the Headquarters company of the 205th Military Police Battalion functioned as Task Force Command. This military police unit, under Lieutenant Colonel John Cairer controlled National Guard units in Clark, Lewis, Marion, Ralls, and Pike counties. After 8 July, however, the EOC realized one task force could not do it all and created three separate task force commands between 9 July and 11 July. Task Force Northeast was under Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Gonzales, Task Force Southeast was under Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Liescheidt followed successively by Colonel Thomas Whitecotton, Lieutenant Colonel Fred Jaeckel, and Lieutenant Colonel William Litzinger. A third task force was Task Force Northwest, originally under Lieutenant Colonel Carl Firkins, Missouri Air National Guard, but later commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George Wilson, followed by Colonel Thomas Hancock. Task Force Northeast had responsibility for the line of Missouri counties along the Mississippi River running from the Iowa border to St. Louis. Task Force Southeast's responsibility extended for the length of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to Cape Girardeau. Task Force Northwest controlled the area between St. Joseph and Independence. STARC ran emergency operations in central Missouri out of the State Emergency Operations Command.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to maintaining command and control over individual units, Task Force Headquarters coordinated the activities of the civilian authorities in an area with the State National Guard Headquarters in Jefferson City. It was the responsibility of the Task Force Headquarters to locally assess the emergency needs of the civilian population, and to determine whether Guard resources were needed and justified. This was often a difficult and thankless task, because some civilian county emergency officials thought of the Guard as a panacea that had all of the resources and answers. It was the job of the task force commander to assess the situation and intervene only when the specific capabilities of the Guard were needed and justified. For instance, if a county emergency management official needed sand for sandbags to repair a levee, he had the ability to order sand from a civilian contractor—he does not need to ask the Guard for help. If, however, the civilian contractor did not have the capability of delivering the sand, and there were no state or private agencies that could deliver it for whatever reason, it was the option of the task force commander to accept this responsibility for the Guard. The Missouri National Guard was, in the phrase of Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Gonzales, Task Force Northeast's commander, "the resource of last resort."

Other considerations had to be made. If, for instance, Guard personnel were able to do

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something for one individual or group, could they do it for another individual or group and feel justified? If a businessman wanted the Guard to evacuate his back hoe from a field threatened with flooding could the Guard feel justified in doing the same service for another business man at another time and place? Guard resources were scarce and expensive.<sup>55</sup> What tasks to take on and what ones to refuse were tough calls for a commander to make and required that the commander measure the individual need within the larger picture. At one point, for instance, officials from the Cyamanide Plant at Palmyra contacted Task Force Northeast with a request to transport a small tractor by helicopter in order to lower it inside a circle of sandbags that completely surrounded the plant. The officials thought that the tractor would help stabilize the sandbag barrier from the inside. Since the plant was a private business, the transportation of the tractor could have been construed as an improper use of Guard resources; to protect a privately owned business. In this instance, however, containing chemicals was in the larger interests of the whole region.



## Task Force Northeast

Task Force Northeast was the first of the three task forces to be activated and remained in existence longer than the other two. Throughout its existence (from July 10 through August 24) Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Gonzales was the task force's commander, and supervised Guard involvement from St. Charles, Missouri, north to the Iowa state line. At one point the jurisdiction of this command was extended along the Missouri River west to Jefferson City.

This task force controlled a variety of units, among them: the Service Battery of the 128th



Photo: MSG Rennie Davis 70th Public Affairs Detachment

### **Air National Guard personnel reinforce a levee at West Quincy, MO.**

John boats, voluntarily placed itself under the control of Task Force Northeast. The services of this unit were especially welcome for rescuing people stranded by rising flood waters and patrolling levees.

The headquarters of this task force was in Hannibal, Missouri, co-located with the 2175th Military Police Company. A unique aspect of this Task Force Headquarters was that it established and sustained its own maintenance shops for the general support of all units who had equipment in the area. As units rotated through the

Field Artillery, the 1438th Bridge Company, Company D of the 1138th Engineers, the 157th Tactical Communications Squadron, of the Air National Guard, the 220th Engineer Company Company, and the 1137th, 1138th, 1139th, 1175th, 1275th, 3175th MP Companies. In addition, during the crisis, a Coast Guard Reserve Unit from Pennsylvania, equipped with six



Photo: MSGT Jerry Bratten, HQ MOARNG

### **Texas Air Guard crew and their Chinook helicopter deliver sandbags to reinforce a levee near Watson, MO.**

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Northeast command area, they often left their heavy equipment behind for other units to use. This obviously was an intelligent decision since it saved time and money when compared to each unit's bringing its own equipment to the area and then taking it home at the end of its tour of flood duty. A potential problem with maintenance existed, however. If a unit of heavy equipment was to break down, sending it back to its home base for repairs would be both expensive and time consuming. So, Task Force Northeast set up its own general maintenance shops at Hannibal and St. Charles under the overall supervision of Master Sergeant William Buckner. Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks, or HEMTTs (pronounced "hemits") and High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles or HMMUVs (pronounced "humvees") were the biggest customers, but generators, outboard motors, and lighting equipment were repaired also. These two shops were an original solution to a maintenance problem that could have flawed the effectiveness of the whole northeastern Missouri operation.<sup>56</sup>



## Canton Missouri: The Guard at Its Best

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Canton is a small farming community on the Mississippi River about thirty five miles north of Hannibal. Throughout most of its existence, Canton has been threatened by flooding. It is not difficult to see why, because most of the town lies below the level of the river, and an earthen levee protects the town from flooding. As one enters the town from the west, one cannot help seeing the 2.7 mile long levee which serves as a backdrop to the town itself—indeed it seems to loom over the small town.<sup>57</sup> The citizens of Canton have always realized that they were vulnerable, and so, have always been careful to keep the levee in good repair.

Yet in July of 1993, the exceptionally heavy rains threatened to raise the level of the Mississippi high enough to overtop the levee. Accordingly, on 7 July, the local Emergency Management Director, Mr. Terry Fretwell, asked SEMA for some National Guard troops to assist the citizens in raising the levee by building a sandbag wall along the top. On 8 July, at 1140, therefore, the EOC in Jefferson City alerted the Service Battery of the 128th Field Artillery, based at the Mexico, Missouri, Armory. Within five hours, 56 officers and men under the command of Captain Leif Strand were on their way to Canton.<sup>58</sup> The soldiers came to town with HEMTTs, HMMUVs, and five ton trucks.

Once the men and equipment arrived, the town of Canton took over the care and support of the unit. The personnel lived in the vacant dormitories of Culver Stockton College, and ate at the cafeterias of the college where meals were available twenty four hours a day.<sup>59</sup> In addition College employees collected the men's uniforms and laundered them daily. Furthermore, the Salvation Army and local Red Cross provided a non-stop supply of snacks and cold drinks, and private restaurants like the local Pizza Hut® made free daily deliveries.<sup>60</sup> Ayer's Oil Company, a local company, supplied fuel free of charge to the unit vehicles.<sup>61</sup>

Another factor that contributed to the success of the Canton mission was the enlightened attitude of Mr. Terry Fretwell, the Emergency Management Director. Each county has such an official, who is supposed to be trained in what to do in emergency situations. Often these individuals know their responsibilities, and realize what they can ask the Guard to do and what they cannot. Problems arise when an Emergency Management Director exceeds his/her authority. In Canton this was not a problem. Mr. Fretwell, was an individual who took his role as emergency management director seriously to the extent that before the '93 flood he had attended at least half a dozen week long training sessions sponsored by the state,<sup>62</sup> and knew the correct procedures to follow in helping the Guard do its own job effectively.

The support of the town and the cooperative attitude between Mr. Fretwell and Captain Leif Strand helped create an atmosphere that hardened into a real bond between Guardsmen

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and townspeople. The townspeople worked side by side with the Guardsmen, and together built a wall of sandbags three feet high and 2.7 miles long on top of the already existing levee. Through this combined action the townspeople were able to see a direct return for their "investment" with the soldiers. In the end both civilians and soldiers had the satisfaction of saving the town.

When the immediate danger was over, Captain Strand's troops were ordered to another trouble spot. As the troops left Canton, the entire town turned out with signs and banners expressing their gratitude to the soldiers. On the soldier's side, they could see directly what their efforts had meant to this north Missouri town, and all had the feeling that their efforts had really counted for something. Staff Sergeant James Bourne summarized the feelings of the soldiers in an interview he gave to a reporter of the Mexico Missouri Ledger, "That [Canton] was our town. There was no way we were going to let that levee fail. We worked a lot of long hours up there to make sure it didn't fail. It was one of only two levees north of St. Louis that did not have some break. We built it to last."<sup>63</sup>

This close bond was the probably reason for the growth of a marvelous, but false legend that has become current throughout Guard since the flood. Supposedly at one point, when the river threatened to break through the sandbag wall on top of the levee, the Guard troops were told that they were to leave the levee in anticipation of a break. According to the legend, the whole unit refused to leave, and continued sandbagging in defiance of orders. It is a colorful legend, and one in keeping with the sometimes "independent" spirit that Guardsmen have occasionally shown throughout American history. However, in this case it did not happen. Still, all legends have a basis in fact, and what probably gave birth to the story were the instructions that every new soldier received when they arrived at Canton. In the event of a break in the levee, the troops were told, those working on the levee were not to leave it and try to outrun the flood waters—that is dangerous and unnecessary. Instead, they were told to stay on the levee itself after the breakthrough, since once the levee breaks, the surviving portions of that levee become the highest point of dry "land" in relation to the river and hence the safest place to be. It was probably these instructions, given to every soldier that arrived in Canton, plus the devotion of the Service Battery personnel to the town of Canton, that combined to create the "legend of Canton."<sup>64</sup>



## **"I'll Haul Anything But a Snake."**

### **Portage Des Sioux and the 1438th Engineer Bridge Company**

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One of the most publicized and original responses of the Missouri National Guard during the Flood of '93 involved the unorthodox, but highly efficient, use of the 1438th Engineer Bridge Company's equipment.

Portage Des Sioux is a small farming community north of St. Louis that sits on a peninsula of land between the Mississippi and the Missouri River. For nearly a century, floods have isolated Portage Des Sioux. The town itself is not threatened, but access in and out of the town during a flood is impossible because of nearly four miles of flood water that separate Portage Des Sioux from the "mainland."

Over the years and through a number of floods, the 1438th Engineer Company (Assault Float Bridge, Ribbon), less ominously called the 1438th Engineer Boat Company, has evolved a clever and original way of keeping the people of Portage Des Sioux in contact with the rest of the world. The soldiers take ninety foot sections of their portable bridges called "interior bays," bolt them together, and attach these to two small high power bridge erection boats to create a very long motorized raft. The unit's combat normal mission is to join a number of interior bays together to build a metal bridge across a river. At Portage Des Sioux a raft was a much better idea.

When the waters started to rise in late June, the unit members suspected they would go back to Portage Des Sioux as they had done during most major floods. They received an alert call on 5 July to be ready for deployment on short notice. It was no surprise to the soldiers, therefore, when on 15 July the unit received orders to travel from their armory in Rolla, Missouri, to Orchard Farm School near Portage Des Sioux to prepare their raft. By 0800, 16 July, the 1438th was ready to transport their first passengers.<sup>65</sup>

The trip from Portage Des Sioux to the "mainland" required careful navigation through four miles of flooded corn and soybean fields. Two small motor boats hooked on to either side steered the huge raft. To change direction, one boat reduced speed while the other increased speed. However, the engine noise of the boats precluded voice commands and so both boat drivers followed the signals of another Guardsman on the raft itself who signaled both drivers by hand.<sup>66</sup> This bizarre composite vehicle faithfully performed its duty for forty days between 16 July and 25 August and carried a total of 6,271 people and 1,951 vehicles including eighteen wheel semi trucks with trailers.<sup>67</sup> In addition the unit used its smaller boats to ferry supplies to Red Cross facilities, haul sandbags to river communities that needed them and managed the evacuation of 42 farm animals.

There were difficulties and dangers with this humanitarian mission. The boats operated in



Photo: MOARNG 70th Public Affairs Detachment

**Members of the 1438th engineer bridge company perform ferry duty at Portage Des Sioux, MO using 90 ft. section of portable bridge.**

water that was so clogged with debris that there was a constant danger of blocking the water intake ports of the boats' engines. To resolve this problem the engineers improvised, and jury-rigged metal plows out of "pig fencing panels," to prevent the intake ports from sucking up damaging debris. Another problem involved navigating over the

constantly changing river bottom littered with sunken or semi-submerged flood debris that could easily damage a boat. The unit needed underwater depth finders to be able to find the safest passage. It got one such device from the State Water Patrol, but the unit could have used more. The 1438th's after action report stressed the need for depth finders to be made a regular part of the unit's equipment inventory.<sup>68</sup>

Many individuals stand out in an operation like this, but one in particular, enjoyed a short moment of fame when the St. Louis Post Dispatch wrote an article about him. Sergeant Lonnie Salts, whom the Post Dispatch reporter said looked like he would be at home on a search-and-destroy mission in the Mekong, was a pilot on one of the boats that pushed the rafts across the flood waters. Sergeant Salts, according to the article apparently enjoyed his work with the 1438th and performed exceptionally well throughout the duty. His quick reversal of his boat's engine once prevented a raft loaded with civilians from colliding with a high power wire. He was willing to haul anything for anybody except a woman's pet snake, which, he insisted, had to ride in another boat.<sup>69</sup>

Just as in Canton, these Guardsmen bonded with the people they came to help. The Guard performed a duty whose value was apparent to everyone. When the crisis was over, the people of Portage Des Sioux held a fish fry for the 1438th to express their gratitude.



Task Force Northwest had perhaps the most confused and diversified history of the three Guard task forces. During its existence from 10 July through 16 August, it passed through three different changes of command and two changes of location. In addition, it was administered first by the Air National Guard and then the Army National Guard. It even closed down briefly when the flooding appeared to be subsiding. Despite all this confusion, the Task Force handled a bewildering number of emergencies and situations that ranged from the bizarre to the comic.

This Task Force not only responded to the flood's destruction of the Hardin Cemetery, it also responded to the obliteration of St. Joseph, Missouri's water supply. At the same time that these emergencies were happening, a group of Lithuanian and Estonian military officers who are visiting the United States on the Partnership for Peace Program, appeared. The Task Force even responded to a report that an individual masquerading as a Army general was on the scene. It was learned later that he was in actuality a visiting National Guard Major General who was visiting from Louisiana. Oddly enough a similar situation occurred in Task Force Northeast's, jurisdiction. In this case the individual actually had been an imposter. Finally, it was Task Force Northwest that provided the clearest example of just how adaptable Guard personnel can be, when the doctors and nurses of the 135th Surgical Hospital, staffed the Task Force Headquarters and ran it for eleven days fulfilling duties in security, logistics, and supply.<sup>70</sup>

The Guard activated Task Force Northwest on 12 July 1993 at Roscrans Air National Guard Base and placed Lieutenant Colonel Carl Firkins in command. Its headquarters were in the 139th Tactical Airlift Group Command Post on Roscrans Air National Guard Base. Initially the Task Force Headquarters was staffed by three Air Guard officers, and one Army Guard officer plus about thirty enlisted personnel from the 139th Security Police Flight Missouri Air National Guard.<sup>71</sup>

Tracing the activities of Task Force Northwest was difficult because its records covering the time period while it was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Carl Firkins were lost when the levee that protected Roscrans failed on 25 July 1993, flooding the base.<sup>72</sup> However, from what can be reconstructed, it appears that besides supervising air delivery of critical flood-fighting supplies, such as, thirteen tons of sandbags to the Iowa Guard at Des Moines, Iowa,<sup>73</sup> they supervised emergency activities in Ray, Carroll, Howard, and Chariton counties, utilizing Army National Guard drawn from the Headquarter Battery of the 129th Field Artillery and Air National Guard Security Police from the 139th Security Police Flight.<sup>74</sup>

Roscrans was not a good site for a task force headquarters. Besides being prone to flooding,<sup>75</sup> it was in a difficult position geographically to command because the area stretched from the Iowa border south to Kansas City, and west to Boone County. By 23 July, therefore, the difficult



location coupled with rising flood waters forced the closing of the Rosecrans headquarters.<sup>76</sup> On that same day, Task Force Northwest got a new commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Wilson, and a new location at the Independence Armory. Lieutenant Colonel Wilson received his initial



MOARNG File Photo

**(above) Rosecrans field April 1952, (below) Same area July 1993**



Photo: MSGT Jerry Bratten, HQ MOARNG

briefing from Colonel James Wakeman, OIC of the Guard's EOC in Jefferson City. Lieutenant Colonel Wilson activated the new task force headquarters at 1030, 24 July.<sup>77</sup>

From this location, Task Force Northwest oversaw a large number of emergency activities until Lt. Colonel Wilson turned over command of the headquarters to Lt. Colonel Thomas J.

Hancock, commanding the 135th Surgical Hospital (MASH) at 0600 on 7 August. The medical personnel of the 135th Surgical Hospital would man Task Force Northwest's headquarters until 16 August, and perform security duties in the field until the end of the flood emergency.<sup>78</sup>

The 135th Surgical Hospital had one of the most difficult jobs during the flood. They were respon-

sible for withdrawing troops from areas where the civilian population was not entirely certain that the crisis was over. In areas where the people were anxious and did not want the Guard to leave, withdrawing the support of the Guard under these conditions required considerable tact and care. Lt. Colonel Hancock's people also had to determine which units to send home based on how long they had been on duty.<sup>79</sup> These kinds of decisions also called for considerable diplomacy.



## 139TH AIRLIFT GROUP AND IOWA FLOOD RELIEF

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The last time the Missouri National Guard and the Iowa National Guard collaborated was during the Iowa Border War of 1839, when Missouri militia and Iowa militia nearly clashed over who owned the triangle of land between the Mississippi and the Des Moines River. In 1993, however, relations were much friendlier.<sup>80</sup> By 20 July, it was apparent to observers in Des Moines, Iowa, that the Missouri River on Iowa's western border was going to top the levee and flood the town unless that levee could be raised. While enough sand was available and many civilians and Iowa Guardsmen were available to work, the actual sandbags were in short supply. When the local sheriff reported this to his county emergency management office, that office contacted Iowa's State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to ask for more sandbags. Iowa's SEMA learned that Illinois had empty sandbags, but did not have the resources to move them. The agency then called Iowa which called Missouri's SEMA Headquarters. The SEMA Headquarters then contacted the Emergency Operations Center in Jefferson City which immediately contacted Task Force Northwest to request air assets that could move sandbags from Illinois to Iowa. When the Task Force Northwest headquarters at Roscrans Air National Guard base replied that they indeed had a C-130 and an air crew, it was an early indication that the whole Emergency Management concept would work.

Airlifting the sandbags was assigned to Captains Steve Bunkowski and Darin Sloan of the 139th Airlift Group, Missouri Air National Guard, that was based at Roscrans Air National Guard Base. As the aircraft flew east from Roscrans Air National Guard Base to Moline, Illinois, to pick up the sandbags, the air crew had a magnificent view of the flooded devastation of Missouri. At the point that they crossed the Mississippi River, it was over a mile wide, and steady rain threatened to make it even wider.

Once in Moline, the Missouri Guardsmen found no Illinois Guardsmen to help load the plane, so a few civilians loaded the 200 bundles of sandbags onto conveyor belts that fed these bundles into the rear of the plane. All nine air crew members, regardless of rank, carried the bags from the end of the conveyor belt to the front of the plane. Each bundle weighed 165 pounds and held 1,000 bags; this cargo totalled 26,000 pounds.

At the other end in Des Moines, there was plenty of help waiting to unload the cargo. In moments the bags were off the airplane as Iowa National Guardsmen formed fire-brigade lines to move the bags directly from the plane to waiting trucks. A few minutes after the plane was emptied, the last truck full of bags had left the airport for levees on the banks of the Missouri. The C-130 then flew back to St. Joseph. The whole exercise from start to finish had lasted six hours. It was just the beginning—for the next month the Missouri Air National Guard would fly endless similar missions.<sup>81</sup>

## THE 118TH AND 121ST QUARTERMASTER DETACHMENTS (WP): PURE WATER FOR ST. JOSEPH

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During times of high water and flood stages, one frequent problem is a lack of pure drinking water. On 24 July rising flood water poured into the water purification plant at St. Joseph, Missouri, and shorted out the machinery necessary to purify water for this northwestern Missouri city of 77,000. The Guard's response was to mobilize two of the smallest and most unique units in the state: the 118th and 121st Quartermaster Detachments from Nevada and Mountain Grove, Missouri, respectively. Both units had a strength of fourteen soldiers and were commanded by Sergeants First Class Larry J. Rose, and Gordon B. Swacina. Water purification units are perhaps the only units in the National Guard whose regular commanders are NCOs.

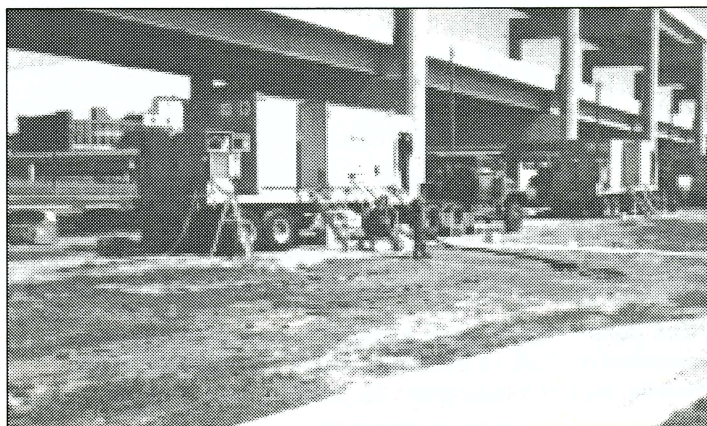


Photo: CPT James Ray

**ROWPU units under the highway bridge at St. Joseph purifying water. 121st Quartermaster Detachment**

Water purification is a highly complicated Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and requires an elaborate three month technical school at Ft. Lee, Virginia. Small as these units were, their importance to the people of St. Joseph was vital. During their deployment, they provided the only source of pure water for the city. In just two days, for instance, these two units produced a total of 373,000 gallons of potable water,<sup>82</sup> which might appear to be a prodigious amount of water, but the daily consumption of St. Joseph, Missouri is nearly ten million gallons of water. What these two Guard units did was to supply the bare minimum of pure drinking water to the population of the city. Unfortunately, water purification units from the Regular Army, also in St. Joseph at the time, were unable to contribute a substantial amount of purified water to that total because of problems with machinery parts and testing apparatus.<sup>83</sup>

In the relief of any large scale emergency, the general rule is, "If something can go wrong it will," and in St. Joseph problems started immediately. Both Guard units set up their purification site in downtown St. Joseph next to the Missouri River at Riverside Park.<sup>84</sup> They both expected to draw water from the river. Unfortunately, because of the flood the Missouri river was filled with an exceptional amount of mud, sewage and floating refuse. This contamination, or turbidity as it is called, continually clogged the filters on the hoses that drew the water from the river. After a day of operation, the two units had produced only 17,000 gallons of water,<sup>85</sup> but had used up half of their filters and purification chemicals in the attempt. Also, rising flood waters were approaching



to within a few feet of the trucks. It was clear that the whole operation had to move.<sup>86</sup> To add to these problems, the water already produced was not potable because of the extreme pollution of the river. The water was pure enough, however, to be used to "cool Southwestern Bell's telephone system to maintain city telephone communication."<sup>87</sup>

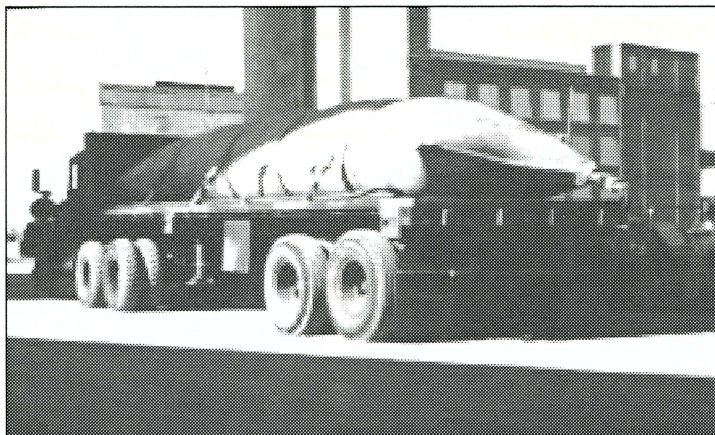


Photo: CPT James Ray

**6000 gallon rubber water bladder known as the "eggroll" mounted on flatbed truck and ready distribution. 118th Quartermaster detachment St. Joseph, MIO.**

At this point the Missouri Department of Natural Resources joined the efforts and suggested a new station at Belcher Lake, a recently completed recreational site about twenty miles south of St. Joseph.<sup>88</sup> There were several advantages to this site: the lake water was clear of debris and there was no threat of the area flooding to this area. The area was also comparatively isolated from population centers which simplified the problems of security for the units.

But not all problems had been settled. The 118th had an older type of water purification machinery called an *urolator* unit. A urolator draws water from a natural source into a truck that has a mounted settling tank. From this tank the water is forced through filters filled with diatoma-

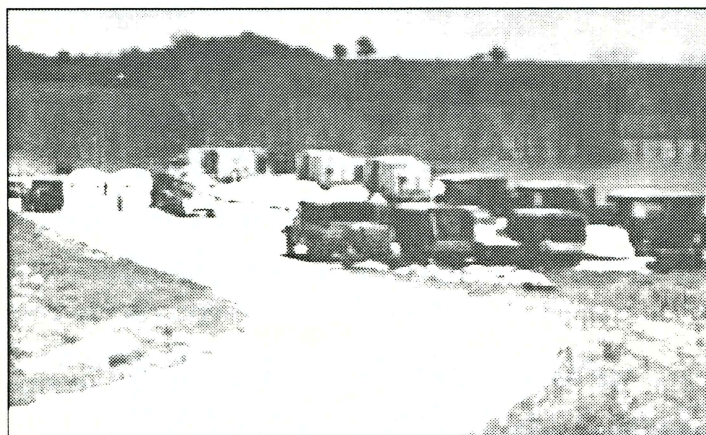


Photo: CPT James Ray

**Belcher Lake Site; 121 st (Tan Trucks) 118th Quartermaster Detachment (Olive Drab) make fresh water for St. Joe.**

ceous earth that clears the water of most visible elements of contamination. Chlorine to kill bacteria, was added before the water was pumped into rubber tanks that could be transported on the backs of flatbed trucks.

Unfortunately, when The Department of Natural Resources tested the 118th's water, it did not meet minimum standards. The fault did not lie with the technical skill of the unit members but rather with the antiquated equipment.

Like most water purification units in 1993, the 118th had been scheduled to receive new state of the art equipment for purification—but the flood arrived before the equipment did.

On the other hand, the 121st had the newest and most sophisticated equipment. This

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equipment was called Reverse Osmosis Plumbing Units (ROWPUs) which were capable of producing water pure enough for use in medical experiments - a quality level well beyond that required for human consumption. The ROWPU units drew water from a natural source into a truck mounted purification unit made up of ten tubes that removed the largest impurities. From these tubes the water was pumped into a multi-media filter composed of five layers of sand of varying coarseness. By the time pumps pushed the water through these layers, it was free of all physical impurities. Next the water went through a spun fiberglass filter. Finally the Guard personnel added chlorine to destroy bacteria. By 1600, on 26 July, only six hours after the units had moved from their initial positions in St. Joseph, the Department of Natural Resources verified that the 121st was producing "potable water with a turbidity of .03 parts per million and a chlorine content of five parts per million."<sup>89</sup>

Production was one thing; distribution was another. The 121st continued to produce the water, while the 118th, lacking equipment for purifying water to the satisfaction of the Department of Natural Resources, used its personnel to supply the 121st's purified water to the people of St. Joseph. To do this, it was necessary to coordinate efforts with civilian agencies and businesses. Between July 27 and July 30, the 118th, along with personnel from the 139th Airlift Group of the Air National Guard, began supervised distribution of 324,000 gallons of purified water to the people of St. Joseph using milk tanker trucks from Mid American Dairies.<sup>90</sup> The dairy sterilized these trucks, drove them to Belcher Lake where Guard personnel filled each one with 6,000 to 7,000 gallons of water. From there the trucks went back to St. Joseph where the water was distributed from nine separate points.

By 31 July the water crisis was over in St. Joseph, and the Guard personnel could be withdrawn. The water was certified safe to drink with a "boil warning," and by 2 August the water was certified potable without boiling.<sup>91</sup> On 30 July, the EOC released the 118th from water distribution duty, and allowed to return to their home station.<sup>92</sup> Three days later, the EOC released 121st to return to Mountain Grove Missouri.<sup>93</sup>

Both the 118th and the 121st were witness in microcosm to the spirit that motivates the National Guard in an emergency. Once alerted, all unit members reported to their assembly points within hours. Some of the men's responses were exceptional. Sergeant First Class Gordon Swacina, the commander of the 121st, was attending a funeral in Las Vegas, Nevada, when he learned that his unit had been activated. He returned immediately to Missouri paying the cost of his airfare out of his own pocket and never thought to ask for reimbursement.<sup>94</sup>

The 121st had just completed two weeks of annual training when they were activated



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again for the crisis in St. Joseph. Initially, some local employers were irritated by the request to release some of their employees for additional duty days. However, when the magnitude of the disaster became apparent, and national news media began to notice the involvement of the two water purification units, employer opposition disappeared. Both the 118th and the 121st were inactivated during fiscal year 1995.<sup>95</sup>

Many events in Missouri's '93, flood ordeal made headlines across the nation, but the biggest story was the washout of coffins and burial vaults from the cemetery at Hardin, Missouri into the Missouri River. Mr. Dean Snow, coroner of Ray County, inadvertently captured the nation's attention when he announced in a local news conference that the Hardin Cemetery washout, ". . . was the worst cemetery disaster in the history of the United States."<sup>96</sup> The disaster, grotesque as it was, did offer the Missouri National Guard an opportunity to demonstrate its adaptability to meet a challenge nobody had even remotely anticipated.

The first stories that the press carried distorted the extent of the Hardin Cemetery disaster. The initial reports, taken from Mr. Snow's press conference, reported that 1,111 graves had been washed out of a cemetery that originally contained 1,479 burials.<sup>97</sup> Later, after careful, measured analysis, officials determined that only 730 burials had washed out and that 590 were either found or accounted for. The large number of burials that were not recovered is misleading, because in a cemetery with burials dating back to 1810, many washed out graves contained nothing that could be recovered.<sup>98</sup>

An initial question is why were so many graves washed from a cemetery that had been flooding regularly for nearly two hundred years? Previous floods allowed the flood waters to reach the Hardin County Cemetery gradually. In 1993, however, the Missouri River levees were breached in such a way that water rolled into the cemetery site at high speeds, which churned up a channel over a hundred feet wide through the site. The damage was obvious and dramatic, and the Ray County Emergency Management Agency felt justified in calling for the aid of the Missouri National Guard.

Initially, local county officials requested the Guard's assistance because they feared the displaced coffins and vaults posed a health hazard. However, the Emergency Management Unit of the Missouri Funeral Director's Association made it clear that this was not a danger. Still, it was soon apparent that only the Guard had equipment suitable for recovering burial vaults, that can weigh as much as 1,500 pounds from the flood waters.

The first Guard unit to respond to this emergency was Company A of the 110th Engineer Battalion that had been performing flood duty down the river at Orrick.<sup>99</sup> As it was an engineer company, the unit had ten HEMTTs in its inventory. These vehicles, each equipped with a crane at the end of a truck bed, can lift a 2,500 pound load.<sup>100</sup> These were the ideal for lifting burial vaults, some of them filled with water, out of the Missouri River.

At the recovery site, Company A engineers and their HEMTTs waited for the small boats of



the Missouri Water Patrol, to locate vaults and maneuver them to places where pavement or another hard surface met the flood water. There, the HEMTT cranes pulled the vaults from the water and transferred them to one of the units five-ton trucks. The vaults were then taken to a temporary morgue which had been set up in the machine shed of Ray County's presiding com-

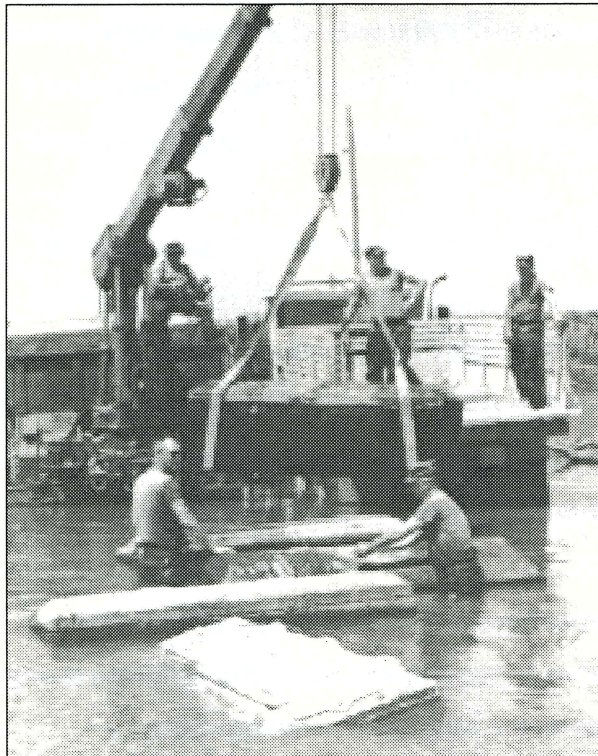


Photo: MSGT Jerry Bratten, HQ MOARNG

**Troops of Company A 110th engineers use HEMTT to lift vaults from the river near Hardin MO.**

missioner. Later, as the number of retrievals increased, the morgue moved to the Ray County Fairgrounds.<sup>101</sup>

By 31 July the Guard was looking for some way to relieve soldiers from what was termed "casket duty" in the Daily Staff Journal Entry of Task Force Northwest Headquarters. By that date the members of Company A, 110th Engineers and troops from Service Battery, 129th Field Artillery had pulled 115 caskets from the flooded water.<sup>102</sup>

The heavy work for which the Engineers and their equipment was admirably suited was over. Next would come the soulful duty of dealing with the caskets that had broken open, individual bodies without caskets, and scattered bones. This was a job that best handled by professional morticians.<sup>103</sup>

Log entries in the Daily Staff Journal of Task Force Northwest betray a desire on the part of the Headquarters to leave this duty behind: "Looking for civilians to replace soldiers," is a common phrase in the journal.<sup>104</sup> Behind these entries is the human reality that this duty was beginning to affect some soldiers, to the extent that several needed counseling from chaplains.<sup>105</sup>

On 1 August, Don Carter, Public Assistance Officer for the State Emergency Management



Photo: MSGT Jerry Bratten, HQ MOARNG

**Troops of Company A 110th engineers unload vaults at temporary**

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Agency visited the Hardin Cemetery with Lieutenant Colonel George Wilson and determined that the area no longer needed Guard assistance.<sup>106</sup> On 4 August the last Guard troops left, bringing this dramatic and emotional chapter of the Flood of '93 to an end.<sup>107</sup>



## Task Force Southeast Headquarters

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Southeast Task Force, had four commanders during the '93 flood: under Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Liescheidt (11 July through 31 July), Colonel Thomas Whitecotton (1 August through 18 August), Lieutenant Colonel Fred Jaeckle (19 August through 3 September) and Lieutenant Colonel William Litzinger (4 September through 18 September). The task force commanded Guard units during events that were both well publicized and dramatic. Dan Rather of "48 Hours," and Harry Smith of "Good Morning America" focused the country's attention on the plight of Ste. Genevieve, the historic town with its French colonial roots that waged a long and ultimately successful struggle against the Mississippi River.<sup>108</sup> The French connection was perhaps the reason why the foreign press publicized the plight of the town in articles carried in Germany, France, and The Netherlands.<sup>109</sup>

People from around the world watched as Companies A, B, C, and D of the 1140th Engineer Battalion, along with aviators from the 1st Battalion and the 135th Aviation Brigade<sup>110</sup> worked with local residents to save the historic town. Yet, the same task force supervised less well publicized but equally important activities. Southeast Task Force oversaw the potentially dangerous situation in St. Louis, Arnold, and Fenton where military police of the 1137th MP Company patrolled these areas with loaded weapons to prevent looting and/or arson.<sup>111</sup> The headquarters also supervised the activities of 1,213 National Guard personnel in their flood fighting activities at Kimmswick, Festus, Commerce, Cape Girardeau, Dutchtown, and St. Charles Missouri. At one time Task Force Southeast had 300 Airmen of the 131st Fighter Wing under its command who used Army Guard HUMMVs to carry out their missions.<sup>112</sup>

Primary headquarters for the Southeast Task Force was in the Armory of the 220th Engineer Company at Arnold, Missouri. Within this building, Task Force personnel controlled all flood fighting units from St. Louis to the Missouri boot heel. As in the other two task force headquarters twelve to fifteen men coordinated the Guard's activities with the appropriate civilian authorities. Personnel for the headquarters were billeted at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, and maintained a vehicle repair facility at the OMS shop in Cape Girardeau.<sup>113</sup>

## At War With the River: Ste. Genevieve and the Guard

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Between 8 July, when the waters of the Mississippi River at Ste. Genevieve first passed the flood stage mark, and 14 August, when it became apparent that the danger to the town was finally past, many of 4,400 inhabitants of this little town no doubt came to understand why the first French settlers gave the place the nickname *Misere* - Wretchedness in English - when they founded it sometime between 1732 and 1735.<sup>114</sup> For over two centuries Ste. Genevieve has suffered from recurrent floods. In 1785, a flood completely washed the town away, and the inhabitants moved and reestablished the town three miles north of its original site.<sup>115</sup> More recently there have been floods in 1951, 1968 and 1973. Each had been rough on inhabitants, but it had also made them resilient. The Christian Science Monitor, described the people as having "a kind of tough radiance...from farmers to the mayor."<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, when the waters started to rise ominously on 8 July and reached three tenths of a foot above flood stage (38 feet),<sup>117</sup> with still higher water predicted, the people of Ste. Genevieve simply set to work to save their town as they so often had done in the past. By 10 July the river was at 41 feet, and during the next twenty-four hours the river rose to 42.2 feet.<sup>118</sup> The rising water quickly covered the airport, destroyed the water treatment plant, electrical station, and



Photo: COL Calvin Broughton

**Guard reinforced levee protects part of Ste. Genevieve, MO., near the corner of Main and Merchant streets.**

sewage treatment plant.<sup>119</sup>

People stoically started the "drill," that included boiling drinking water, showering with eyes and mouth shut, and eating food directly out of the wrapper rather than risk touching it with a hand that might be contaminated. Many knew from previous experience that even the surface of a soda can taken from an ice chest had to be sterilized before drinking;

because it might be contaminated by another person's hand that had taken a soda from the ice chest earlier. The punishment for ignoring these precautions was nausea, diarrhea, or both.<sup>120</sup>

Surprisingly, Ste. Genevieve was not protected by a levee despite years of flooding. The town had never been able to raise the \$10,000,000 in matching funds that would have allowed



the Federal Government to build an effective bulwark against the Mississippi.<sup>121</sup> Lacking the money, the little town relied on six miles of smaller levees built by the county with some state aid.<sup>122</sup> The risk of flooding was well known: just six months before, Ste. Genevieve's historic downtown area, with its quaint French colonial houses, had been designated sixth on the list of "America's most endangered historic places," published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.<sup>123</sup>

Still, the people were determined. When Governor Mel Carnahan visited the town to examine the damage, he said he liked the town's fighting spirit. "It's the attitude that you're going to fight back with."<sup>124</sup> Residents and non-residents repeatedly drew an analogy to war throughout the crisis. A reporter from the Daily Star Journal of Warrensburg wrote:

*The people sit behind bunkers of sandbags and watch the front line, as if they are anticipating a battle.... There's a wall sized aerial photo in a conference room at the Marina, where the battle plans are being drawn. We've got a war going on here...we're fighting the Mighty Mississippi.*<sup>125</sup>

Once the national and international press publicized the plight of the town volunteers flocked to help. A list on a wall in the city hall recorded their diversity. Many were Missourians, but many came from out of state: California, Vermont, Arkansas, Kansas, Ohio, Colorado, Wyoming, Kentucky, Oregon, and Washington D.C.<sup>126</sup> "People from Ohio met people from Denver bagging



Photo: COL Calvin Broughton

**COL Calvin Broughton briefs (seated L to R) BG John Havens, Assistant Adjutant General, MOARNG; MG Raymond Rees, Director of the ARNG; and Bill Anderson, Mayor of Ste. Genevieve.**

sand in Missouri," was how one reporter put it in a phrase that captured the amazing spirit of the whole event.<sup>127</sup>

Still, even with this generous will, the job was too big for the residents and their volunteers. Within a week the town had spent \$1,025,000.00, and the City Administrator, David Angerer, estimated that, when the crisis was past, it would cost \$16,225,000.00 to clean up the town.<sup>128</sup> In the end they had to call in help from the Missouri National Guard.

Ste. Genevieve would be the Guard's greatest single effort during the flood of 1993. During



the period that the four letter units of the 1140th Engineers worked in Ste. Genevieve, the Guardsmen and the townspeople filled 1.1 million sand bags, with 25,000 tons of mine tailings. They reinforced the existing levees with 192,000 tons of rock, and used another 291,000 tons of rock to reinforce and extend a levee south of town called the Farmer' Levee.<sup>129</sup> In terms of manpower, by the end of the flood in mid-August, 400 members of the 1140th Engineers and the 1st Battalion of the 135th Aviation Brigade would have spent time in Ste. Genevieve fighting the Mississippi.<sup>130</sup>

Yet, even as they asked for the Guard's help, some of the people in Ste. Genevieve were suspicious. After all, these were strangers to whom the town's people were entrusting their homes and businesses. Furthermore, many of these citizens, had lived beside the river all their lives—this was not their first flood—they could be critical of some stranger, especially if he or she did not know his business.

Happily, for all concerned, the man in charge would be Colonel Calvin Broughton, on spe-

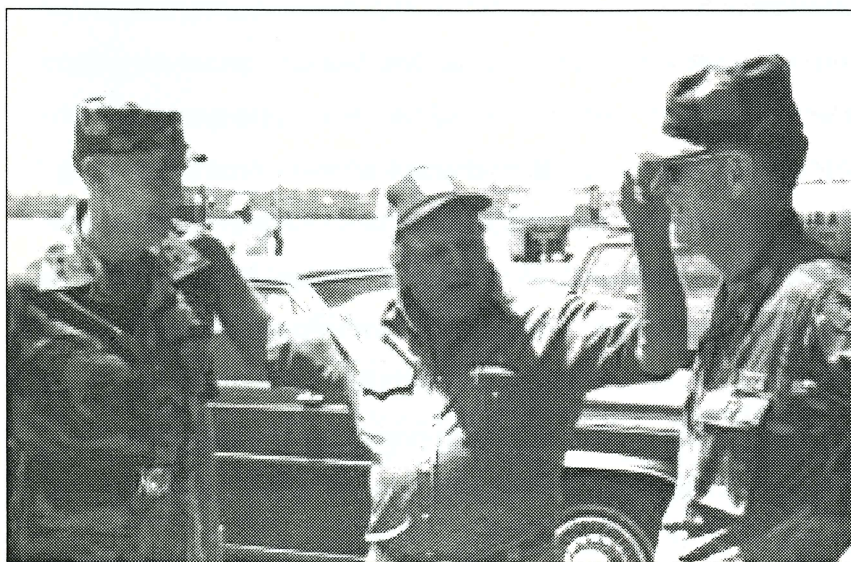


Photo: COL Calvin Broughton

**MG Raymond Rees and COI Calvin Broughton confer with Emerald Loida, president of levee district 2.**

cial assignment from the Adjutant General. Colonel Broughton knew floods and he knew southern Missourians. He had fought his first flood in 1973 as a First Lieutenant of Company C, 1140th Engineers.<sup>131</sup> He respected the native, innate knowledge that the people of Ste. Genevieve had about fighting floods, and furthermore he had a clear picture of how the Guard should

react in a civil emergency. In his opinion, the Guard was there to help, not dictate. It was up to the civilians to call the shots. Throughout Missouri, during the flood of '93, the unit commanders who performed best in the field were the ones like Colonel Broughton who respected the abilities of their civilian counterparts. These were the commanders whose units left towns at the end of the flood danger with the congratulations and thanks of the people.

To this solid rule for success, however, Colonel Broughton added a few initiatives of his own. He built cohesiveness and cooperation between civilians and military personnel by establishing a





Photo: COL Calvin Broughton

**Guard levee tops 50 ft. mark near corner of Washington and Main, Ste. Genevieve, MO.**

descending chain of command that included civilians as well as soldiers. At the top were the local civilian authorities, like the mayor, city administrator, sheriff, and emergency management director assisted by the National Guard command team. The civilian team told the Guard team what they wanted done, and the Guard team decided how they could do it. But below the top command level

was a descending chain of command that stretched down to the individual householder. For instance, there were four main levees defending Ste. Genevieve. The Guard personnel at each one were under a National Guard lieutenant matched with a civilian who was responsible for that particular levee. Behind each levee were neighborhoods, and each of these had a military NCO who had his civilian counterpart. At bottom was the individual home where the civilian home owner had a National Guardsman who shared responsibility for that dwelling with its owner. The system assured teamwork through shared responsibility and knowledge.<sup>132</sup>

But innovation did not stop there. Colonel Broughton and his team came up with some more original ideas. For instance, in any flood operation there is a natural bottleneck—filling sand bags. Filling bags with a shovel is slow and difficult; it requires two people, one to hold the bag and another to fill it, one shovel full at a time. In the early days of the flood, there were hundreds of people gathered at the VFW hall and at the high school laboriously filling sandbags in just this manner. Soon after the Guard arrived, however, someone whose name remains unknown—in spite of efforts to find out—had an inspiration about streamlining the process of filling sand bags. The Guard borrowed the Highway Department's trucks that were used to spread cinders on icy roads, cut off the rotor blades that spread the salt and cinders and attached an orange plastic traffic cone, with the small hole pointing downward, to the hole through which the cinders had previously dropped onto the rotor blades. When people substituted sand for cinders a steady stream of sand flowed into the wide end of the cone and out through the small end in a steady, controlled flow. Filling sandbags became a simple process of simply placing an empty bag under



the hole and passing in along to be tied off. This simple innovation created a surplus of sandbags that soon filled the parking lot of Valle High School.

Yet the innovation did not stop there. Broughton used this method of filling sandbags to alleviate the crowds of spectators, usually women, children, and older citizens, who clogged

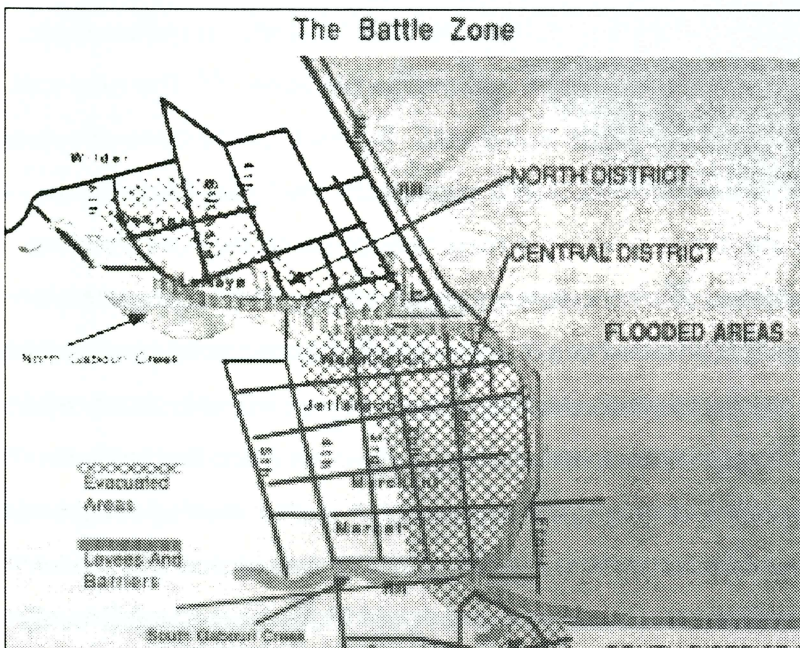


Photo: COL Calvin Broughton

**Sandbag stockpile at Ste. Genevieve's Valle High School.**

streets and roads for want of anything useful to do in this emergency. Since filling sandbags with the new method required virtually no strength, the Guard appealed to people not working on the levees to help fill sandbags. Hundreds of young and old people showed up to help. As a consequence the number of filled sandbags increased in direct proportion to the declining number of spectators. On 9 and 10 July, using the new method, volunteers filled 99,000 sandbags. By the beginning of August there was a reserve of 320 pallets of sandbags waiting to be used.<sup>133</sup>

The tactical problem of protecting the town of Ste. Genevieve was made difficult not only by the lack of an adequate levee system, but also by the terrain of the town. Most of the town's



Source: Ste. Genevieve Herald 14 July 1993

**National Guard levees and barriers that protected Ste. Genevieve.**

historic part, as well as the business district, lay east of Fourth Street in the area that was prone to flooding. That two small streams, the North and South Gabouri Creeks flowed on either side of the historic district into the Mississippi, added to the problem. Levees had to be built up on either side of these creeks, so that from the air the levee system in the town looked like three "U's" lying on their sides with the curved end pointing toward the



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Mississippi River bottom land. The northernmost "U" protected the town from Veterans Drive to the north bank of North Gabouri Creek; the second "U" protected the center part of town and ran along the south side of North Gabouri Creek to the edge of the bottom land along the river and then along the north shore of South Gabouri Creek. Finally, the last "U" ran along the south side of South Gabouri Creek until it met St. Mary's Road south of town.<sup>134</sup> To the south of the town, another levee system called the Farmer's Levee, had been built to protect some 7000 acres of extremely rich bottom land. This levee took off from the south end of town and ran east across the bottom land to a place called the Marina, a commercial establishment for boating on the Mississippi. From the Marina it turned south and ran for about three and a half miles until it ended near Kaskaskia, Island.<sup>135</sup> To equalize pressure on both sides of this long Farmer's Levee the Guard allowed flood water to slowly fill in and cover the fields that the levee protected so there the levee actually had water on both its sides. Some distance behind the Farmer's Levee was a secondary levee called the Valley Spring Levee that the Guard had reinforced at the request of some residents who lived along St. Mary's Road, and who feared their homes might be flooded.<sup>136</sup>

The main campaign of the Guard units throughout the flood was to not only maintain these levees, but also to raise their height and expand their width with rock and sandbags. The first step in doing this was psychological. Colonel Broughton ordered Army Guard surveyors to calculate how high each levee needed to be to contain the flood waters. When that height was determined, soldiers painted green lines on telephone poles and trees to mark the height to which the levee needed to be built. The marks became a visual goal to work towards—a measure of how much had been accomplished, and how much more needed to be done.<sup>137</sup> The next task was to move thousands of tons of rock and sand to the levee sites. The rock came down the river on barges and along Highway 61 by commercial and Guard trucks from the Tower Rock Stone Company Quarry seven miles north of Ste. Genevieve. The mine tailings came by truck from the Mississippi Lime Company in Ste. Genevieve.<sup>138</sup> Fortunately, a great deal of the rock could be moved by barge directly to the spot on the levee where it was needed. Guard bulldozers pushed the rock off the barges and spread it along the dikes. Moving the stone was comparatively easy, but unloading it could be hazardous. The great fear was that heavy barges each loaded with 1600 tons of rock would ram into the levee and punch a hole through the dike, thus undoing in an instant what the Guard had labored day and night to build.<sup>139</sup> Often bulldozers on the levee carefully pulled the barge towards the dike while the tug captain behind the barge stood ready to instantly reverse engines if there was a possibility of hitting the dike too hard.<sup>140</sup>

Still, tons of rock could not be unloaded directly from the barges onto the levees. Instead it had to be delivered to the Marina south of Ste. Genevieve where bulldozers unloaded it onto five ton Army Guard trucks that hauled it to where the Guard engineers were increasing either the height or width of a levee. Company C of the 1140th Engineers utilized all its own trucks as well as five other trucks borrowed from other units to remain on duty for twenty-four hours straight for hauling thousands of tons of rock to the Valley Spring Levee west of the Farmer's Levee.<sup>141</sup> Likewise Company D, 1140th Engineers, moved a total of 100,000 tons of rock by truck increasing the length of the Farmer's Levee.<sup>142</sup> The goal was to increase the height of each of the levees around Ste. Genevieve to fifty feet.<sup>143</sup> Fifty feet became the goal of all the units. In the Guard headquarters at City Hall Captain Stephen Kohl, commander of Company D, had copied and displayed a quote onto a large piece of paper that captured the attitude of the moment:



*ON THE PLAINS OF HESITATION LIE THE BLACKENED BONES OF COUNTLESS 1000S WHO AT THE DAWN OF VICTORY SAT DOWN TO REST AND RESTING DIED. DO NOT REST! 50 FEET!*<sup>144</sup>

Once Guard troops increased the height of the levees and expanded their bases, the next problem became maintaining these monoliths. Levees, especially those partially constructed of sandbags, become saturated after a time, would spring leaks.<sup>145</sup> The only way to prevent this was to constantly increase the thickness of the base. On the few days when the river level was not rising—usually because a levee on the Illinois side had given way—the engineers expended their efforts in just this activity.<sup>146</sup> Generally the levees held, but there were some exceptions. On 1 August, the Valley Spring Levee guarding the houses on St. Mary's road broke despite the best efforts of the Guard to maintain it. The pressure of the water rushing through the breach was, "like a fire hose shooting water," according to Vern Bauman, the president of District Three Levee Board.<sup>147</sup>



To reduce breaks like this required constant patrolling in order to find potential trouble spots before they became major breaks. The Guard consequently spent much of its time patrolling their own work with vehicles and on foot, but they also used the OH-58 Scout Helicopters of the 1st Battalion of 135th Aviation. These helicopters flew the entire length of the levees every hour, day or night, looking for weak spots. At night they used search lights to illuminate both sides of a levee.<sup>148</sup> During the night of 21 July, a helicopter of the 135th spotted a potential break from the air and was able to alert ground personnel who quickly prevented a major breach in the northern most levee. The helicopters sometimes flew 21 hours a day. By regulation after 50 hours in the air each helicopter had to return to Whiteman Air Force Base for inspection, putting a strain on the ability of the unit to maintain adequate surveillance over the levee system.<sup>149</sup>



Photo: 70th Public Affairs Detachment

**SGT Jack Sartin, 1140th Engineer Battalion works in 95 degree temperature east of Ste. Genevieve at Dutchtown.**

For the Guardsmen of the 1140th, the pace of flood fighting, whether it was building levees or maintaining them, was a frantic sequence of twelve hours on, twelve hours off, and twelve hours on again. After twelve hours of backbreaking work, there was barely time enough to take a shower, eat a meal, and sleep eight hours in the high school gym, which lacked air conditioning, before starting another twelve hour work shift. There was little time for anything else. Perhaps the busy schedule was the reason that none of the letter companies of the 1140th reported any disci-



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pline or morale problems—people were just too tired to get into trouble.<sup>150</sup> Good food, and hot showers were key elements in maintaining morale. At one point, when the water at the high school became too contaminated for the troops to use for showers, an enterprising soldier from Cape Girardeau called his employer, Prairie Farms Dairy, and persuaded that business to deliver 10,000 gallons of clean water to Ste. Genevieve in two milk tanker trucks.<sup>151</sup> The Guard contacted with local restaurants to feed the troops during the crisis. This infusion of money helped the local economy which had been hurt by the flood that ruined Ste. Genevieve's normally lucrative summer tourist season. During the two weeks between 6 July and 18 July, meals for Company C and D cost the Guard \$41,451.34.<sup>152</sup> Another boost to the wounded economy of the town came when the Guard purchased 20,000 gallons of fuel locally as well as spare parts to repair its many vehicles.<sup>153</sup>

Most soldiers in the 1140th Engineers spent their two weeks of annual training for 1993, fighting the flood in Ste. Genevieve. Companies C and D arrived on 6 and 7 July respectively, to be replaced on 18 July by Company A, which was, in turn, joined by Company B on the 25th.<sup>154</sup> Yet, even as their units returned home, many Guardsmen, felt a need to volunteer, to stay on and fight the flood for another week or two. For instance, when Company A arrived to take over from Companies C and D, thirty-five men from these two companies volunteered to stay on and serve with Company A.<sup>155</sup> Man power was never a problem.

By 15 August it was clear that the crisis had passed, and that Ste. Genevieve would survive. By that date, only a few Guardsmen remained. Earlier, as each unit left Ste. Genevieve, the towns people turned out to express their gratitude. The newspapers from various Missouri towns who had sent troops to fight the flood, had numerous quotes from locals that demonstrate the feelings that the people of Ste. Genevieve had for the National Guard personnel who had worked so hard to save their town: "Local guard unit departs as heroes," "Thank God for the National Guard," and "4500 People in Ste. Genevieve say thanks to the men of Delta, " represent typical responses.<sup>156</sup>



## A Different Role: The 1137th Military Police in St. Louis

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The flood of '93' brought out the best and the worst in people. The best was exemplified by the heroic actions of the people at places like Alexandria, Canton, Ste. Genevieve, and a dozen other towns where people sacrificed time and money to help each other. Yet, there were places where people in the midst of adversity took the opportunity to prey upon their fellow citizens. In south St. Louis during the height of the flood, some people entered the area to loot the homes of other people who had been forced to evacuate by the rising waters.

When the flood waters reached St. Louis, the city was protected by an impressive series of levees that were supposed to protect the town to a height of fifty-two feet. Although the water level reached a high of 49.58 feet on 1 August, this levee system was more than adequate to prevent major flooding.<sup>157</sup> Unfortunately the levee system protecting other parts of the city from



Photo: MSGT Jerry Bratten HQ MOARNG

**Military policeman, SGT Tony Marquardt, 3175th MPs and an unidentified Missouri Waterpatrolman, patrol flooded area in West Alton, MO.**

flooding of smaller rivers flowing into the Mississippi proved inadequate. When the levees along the banks of the River Des Peres broke in several places and flooded the areas of Fenton, Carondolet, Arnold, LeMay and Des Peres,<sup>158</sup> the break disrupted the lives of some 12,000 residents forcing the abandonment of nearly 1,000 homes in the area.<sup>159</sup>

Even before the levee break, the Emergency Operations Center in Jefferson City had dispatched several Guard units to the area to maintain the levee system, among them the Army Guard's 1035th Maintenance Company and elements of the Service Battery, and A Battery, of the 128th Field Artillery. In addition, the Air National Guard sent the 131st Civil Engineering Squadron, 121st Air Control Squadron, and the 218th Engineering Installation Squadron.<sup>160</sup> But when the St. Louis Police Department began to indicate that looting was a problem, it became necessary to send military policemen to the area.

The first military police troops to arrive in south St. Louis were 119 members of the 1137th Military Police Company. One detachment of the unit normally drilled at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, but the other two detachments came from the southern Missouri towns of Caruthersville,



and Kennett.<sup>161</sup> The 1137th was a Guard unit that had seen considerable of duty. In 1989, elements of that unit had been on duty in Panama during "Operation Just Cause," and had built and operated a 3,000 man prisoner of war compound for the Regular Army.<sup>162</sup> Later in 1991, the unit had served in Saudi Arabia and had also built and operated a prisoner of war compound for Iraqi soldiers.<sup>163</sup> The unit was tough and experienced and included several civilian police officers.

At the time of its assignment to south Saint Louis, the company was preparing to go to annual training at Fort Leonard Wood, and in fact



MOARNG File Photo

**Unidentified Military policemen direct traffic away from a flood area.**

some advance elements had already left for that site,<sup>164</sup> but on 9 July these individuals were ordered to report instead to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. Initially the unit members served at "static posts," or what the public would call road blocks. After areas considered risks for flooding had been evacuated, the Guard and St. Louis Police Department considered these areas ripe for looting, and closed them. Residents, were issued passes, and could pass back and forth fairly freely, but all others were denied entry. By 11 July that section of St. Louis known as Des Peres was guarded by 44 1137th MPs at static posts, while 22 other MPs controlled access to LeMay, and four MPs blocked entry into Fenton.<sup>165</sup>

Unfortunately, after establishing these posts several incidents occurred that persuaded the commander of the 1137th in St. Louis, Captain Brian Taylor, and Colonel Wakeman, OIC of the Emergency Operations Center in Jefferson City, that the units MPs needed to carry loaded 45s. There were numerous attempts to run the static posts, MPs heard gun shots in the area, and police reported evidence of looters in the areas.<sup>166</sup> Surprisingly, on 12 July, the St. Louis Police Department had already made a request to Lieutenant Colonel Liescheidt, the commander of Southeast Task Force (the headquarters that controlled the Guard units in south St. Louis) that MPs carry loaded pistols.<sup>167</sup> That same day the 1137th began preparing the troops for this dramatic change in procedure. Soon afterwards, the MPs acquired live ammunition from the supplies of the 1138th Engineers based at Jefferson Barracks.<sup>168</sup>



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The rules of engagement for using live ammunition were detailed and complex, and the MPs knew them by heart. The .45 caliber pistol could only be fired when: 1) "Lesser means have been exhausted. 2) There was risk of serious bodily harm to innocent persons. 3) The purpose of its use is one or more of the following: a. self defense, b. prevention of a crime that involves a substantial risk of death or serious bodily harm (i.e. setting fire to inhabited dwellings or sniping)." <sup>169</sup> Furthermore, all armed MPs were to operate in support of a uniformed St. Louis policeman. <sup>170</sup>

In the weeks that followed, no MP of the 1137th had to fire his pistol, but the incidents they handled could have escalated into ones requiring deadly force: there were a number of incidents when civilians refused to stop at road blocks, attempted to run down a MP who was on foot, started fires in abandoned buildings, broke into vacant buildings, vandalized vehicles, became drunk, disorderly, and were abusive towards military personnel doing their duty. Several times MPs assisted police officers in the apprehension of individuals found looting inside vacated buildings. <sup>171</sup> On 23 July two armed MPs placed themselves between a man and woman being pursued by two knife-wielding men, who subsequently fled. On 27 July two MPs from the unit detained a suspected rapist and turned him over to St. Louis Police officers. <sup>172</sup>

Even without the threat of physical confrontation, many police jobs presented themselves for the MPs to do. Over the period of their duty in south St. Louis, the MPs transported homeowners into and out of areas that were in danger of flooding, apprehended sightseers in small boats that insisted in entering the "off limits" areas, detained juveniles engaged in vandalism, gave first aid to individuals injured in automobile accidents, and investigated reports of drownings and DWIs. By 17 July the amount of work for MPs had increased to the point where the 1175th MPs from Boonville, Missouri had to be called in to help. <sup>173</sup>

The St. Louis Police Department was complimentary. Colonel Ray Lauer, Deputy Police Chief of St. Louis stated publicly that: "We couldn't have done it without them [1137th MPs]. Whenever we needed assistance, they were there to help us. This has tested our manpower and the guard has been there to help us." <sup>174</sup>

On 29 July the 1137th was able to turn their area over to the Security Police of the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard. <sup>175</sup> An initial difficulty was that the Air Force personnel were not trained in the use of the HMMUV which was the main tactical vehicle the MPs used. However, the Air Force personnel caught on quickly, and the Army MPs turned over 55 vehicles to them. <sup>176</sup>

The experience of the 1137th had certainly not been typical of Army Guard personnel during the flood. Still, civilians in the area appreciated their help. A friendly wave and smile came

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from many an MP on patrol, and snacks and cold drinks came from many grateful citizens.<sup>177</sup>



Anytime the Guard performs a mission, valuable lessons result, and the Great Flood of '93 was no exception. The military has a ready-made medium for summarizing and analyzing these lessons in the after action reports that every unit has to submit to its higher headquarters after completing its assignment. As each Missouri Guard unit completed a tour of flood duty, the commander wrote and submitted an after action report to State Headquarters in Jefferson City. On 29 October, 1993, State Headquarters issued its summary of these after action reports in its own, overall, and conclusive after action report entitled: Observations, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations: State Emergency Duty—Flood 1993. In the clear, no nonsense prose, so characteristic of military writing, the report skips over the fatigue, hard work, and heroism that was the common experience throughout the flood relief effort, and concentrates instead on procedures that worked well and ones that did not.

Such recommendations do not imply failures. Instead, they make clear that hindsight gives valuable clues about how the Guard can improve its reaction to the next crisis situation.

In this vein, the report cited: 1) A need for all officers to be familiar with the chain of command from the local civilian authority to the EOC; 2) A need for unit commanders to be selective in determining what missions they can accept and be certain that the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) has certified the mission as one only the Guard can perform; 3) A need to integrate communications including cellular phones, commercial telephones, as well as HF and FM radios; 4) A need for the Guard to use its Public Affairs staff more widely and aggressively so as to be sure cover all important events and provide guidance in disseminating information; 5) Finally, there is a need for a continuing effort to train Guard officers in identifying the local people who are officially recognized to handle emergency situations. Likewise, these civilians need to be educated in recognizing what Guard personnel and units can and cannot do for them.

Those procedures that the report cited as especially successful were: 1) Most Guard commanders knew the limitations of their authority and how they were supposed to interact with civilian emergency leaders; 2) The Guard had a clear cut procedure, and SOP, for addressing a state wide crisis; 3) There was centralized control of air and ground transportation units that allowed for maximum efficient use of people and equipment; 4) The EOC innovatively created and used a future planning section that concentrated on projecting what climactic conditions would prevail up to 72 hours in the future, and then planned ahead to allocate resources and manpower to those situations; 5) Whenever possible the Guard used local vendors to feed, house, and supply

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the soldiers fighting the flood. This allowed Guard personnel to be utilized mainly to fight the flood and reduced military support personnel; 6) Finally the report expressed pride in the innovative and original methods of fighting the flood that were evidenced throughout the ranks. From using HEMTT cranes to lift burial vaults out of the water, to using traffic cones attached to the ends of sand/salt trucks for filling sand bags, Guard personnel showed the special creativity that wins battles in war and saves time, lives, and property in peace.



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## APPENDICES

### Missouri Army Guard Units that Fought the Flood of '93'

<u>Home Station</u>	<u>Unit Name</u>
Albany	Battery A, 129th Field Artillery
Anderson	Company A, 203rd Engineer Battalion
Boonville	1175th Military Police Company
Cape Girardeau	135th Engineer Group
Cape Girardeau	Headquarters, 1140th Engineer Battalion
Caruthersville	1137th Military Police Company
Charleston	Company A, 1140 Engineer Battalion
Chillicothe	Battery B, 129th Field Artillery
Clinton	Company D, 110th Engineer Battalion
Columbia	Headquarters, 128th Field Artillery Battalion
De Soto	1035th Maintenance company
Eldon	Company D, 735th Support Battalion
Farmington	Company D, 1140th Engineer Battalion
Festus	220th Engineer Company
Fulton	175th Military Police Battalion
Fredericktown	Company B. 1140th Engineer Battalion
Hannibal	2175th Military Police Company
Harrisonville	1139th Military Police Company
Independence	Battery D, 129th Field Artillery Troop Command
Jackson	Company A, 1140th Engineer Battalion
Jefferson City	Headquarters, State Area Command 70th Public Affairs Detachment 1035th Maintenance Company

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**Home Station****Unit Name**

Jefferson City (continued)

1221st Transportation Company

35th Division Support Command

735th Maintenance Battalion

635th Aviation

Jefferson Barracks

1137th Military Police Company

Company A, 1138th Engineer Battalion

Battery A, 128th Field Artillery

Headquarters, 1138th Engineer Battalion

Company B, 110th Engineer Battalion

880th Engineer Battalion

Kansas City

Headquarters, 110th Engineer Battalion

Company A, 110th Engineer Battalion

Company B, 110th Engineer Battalion

135th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital

Kennett

1137th Military Police Company

Kirksville

Battery B, 128th Field Artillery

Lexington

Company C, 110th Engineer Battalion

Macon

Company D, 1138th Engineer Battalion

Marshall

Battery C, 128th Field Artillery

Maryville

Headquarters, 129th Field Artillery

Mexico

Service battery, 128th Field Artillery

Moberly

1175th Military Police Company

Mountain Grove

121st Quartermaster Detachment

Neosho

Company A, 203rd Engineer Battalion

Nevada

118th Quartermaster Detachment

Company A, 735th Support Battalion

Osage Beach

Company D, 735th Support Battalion



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**Home Station****Unit Name**

Perryville

Company B, 1140th Engineer Battalion

Portageville

Company C, 1140th Engineer Battalion

Richmond

Service Battery, 129th Field Artillery

Rolla

1438th Engineer Company

St. Clair

3175th Military Police Company

205th Military Police Battalion

1137th Military Police Company

St. Joseph

135th Signal Battalion

Sedalia

135th Field Artillery Brigade

Sikeston

Company C, 1140th Engineer Battalion

Springfield

Company F, 735th Support Battalion

Trenton

Company B, 735th Support Battalion

Warrenton

3175th Military Police Company

West Plains

1138th Military Police Company

St. Louis/Bridgeton

110th Fighter Squadron

110th Weather Flight

131st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

131st Civil Engineer Squadron

131st Fighter Wing

131st CS

131st Military Support Flight

131st Communication Flight

131st Mission Support Squadron

131st Resource Management Squadron

131st Security Police Flight

131st Service Flight

131st Mission Support

231st Civil Engineer Flight

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**Home Station****Unit Name**

St. Louis/Bridgeton (continued)

239th Combat Communications Squadron

571st Air Force Band

St. Louis/ Jefferson Barracks

157th Air Control Group

121st Air Control Group

131st Civil Engineer Squadron

218th Engineer Installation Squadron

St. Joseph

139th Airlift Group

139th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

139th Civil Engineering Squadron

139th Mobile Aerial Port Flight

139th Mission Support Flight

139th Mission Support Squadron

139th Service Police Flight

139th Services Flight

139th Tactical Clinic

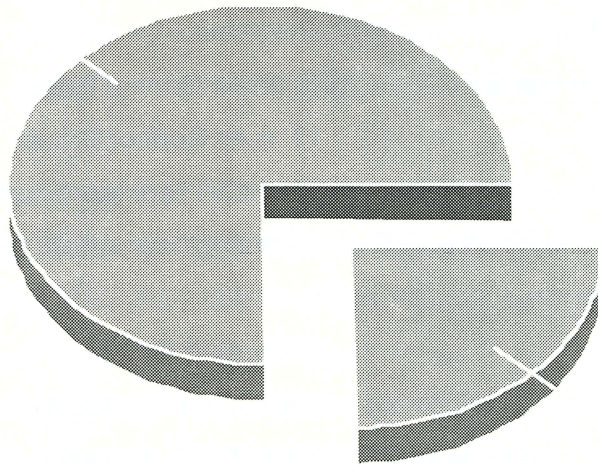
180th Airlift Squadron



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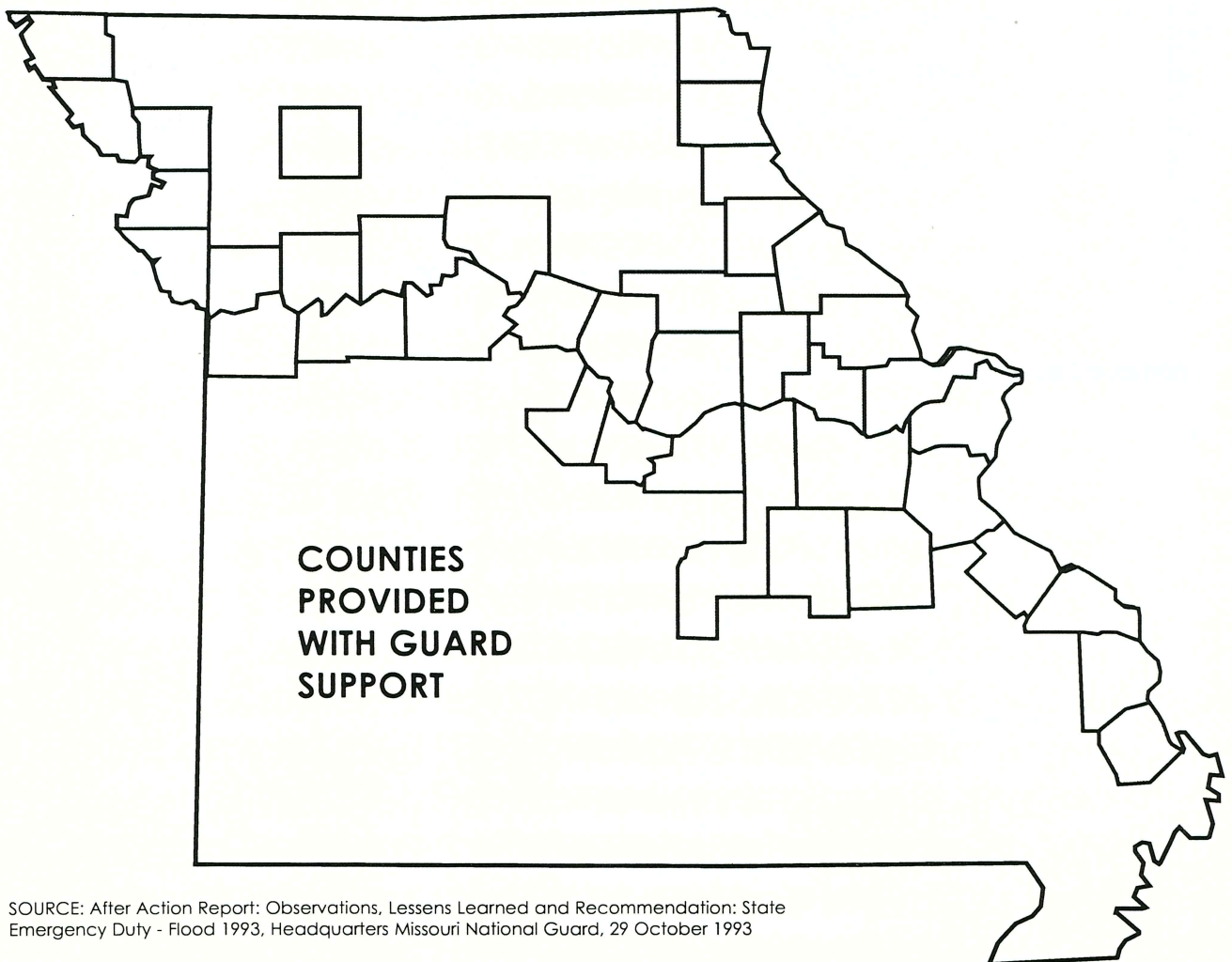
**ARNG & ANG SED PERSONNEL**  
**TOTAL PERSONNEL 5615**

**ARNG**  
**4229**



**ANG**  
**1386**

**AS OF 05 OCTOBER 1993**



SOURCE: After Action Report: Observations, Lessons Learned and Recommendation: State  
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<sup>173</sup> News Release, 70th PAD, 18 July 1993.

<sup>174</sup> Southeast Missouri Task Force, News Release 28 July 1993.

<sup>175</sup> After Action Report, 1137th Military Police company, 11 August 1993.

<sup>176</sup> News Release, Southeast Missouri Task Force, 28 July 1993.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with SSG Joseph Morton, 1137th Military Police Company, 3 November 1993.







